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Afoot and Afloat

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The Riverside Literature Series

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# A FOOT AND AFLOAT

BY

JOHN BURROUGHS

WITH BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH BY  
CLIFTON JOHNSON



BOSTON NEW YORK CHICAGO  
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## PUBLISHERS' NOTE

THE three papers given in this volume will appeal especially to the large number of boys and girls who enjoy stories of boating, camping, and tramping experiences. The first, "A Summer Boating Trip," is from "Pepacton and Other Sketches;" the second, "Camping with the President," is from the "Atlantic Monthly" for May, 1906; and the third, "A Tramp in the Catskills," is a selection, complete in itself, from "Birch Browsings" in "Wake-Robin." The biographical sketch by Clifton Johnson will also be enjoyed by children who have become familiar with Burroughs's writings.

In presenting another volume of Burroughs's essays in the Riverside Literature Series, the publishers feel that the reception accorded the previous Burroughs numbers in this series testifies to the adaptability of the writings of this nature philosopher to school use. The desirability of bringing children into that intimate and sympathetic relationship with nature which pervades all of Mr. Burroughs's writings is apparent to all teachers who recognize the need and the difficulty of inculcating a love of nature in their pupils.

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# JOHN BURROUGHS

## A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

BY CLIFTON JOHNSON

IN the town of Roxbury, among the western Catskills, was born April 3, 1837, John Burroughs. The house in which he first saw the light was an unpainted, squarish structure, only a single story high, with a big chimney in the middle. This house was removed a few years later, and a better and somewhat larger one, which still stands, was built in its place. The situation is very pleasing. Roundabout is a varied country of heights, dales, woods and pastures, and cultivated fields. The dwelling is in a wide upland hollow that falls away to the east and south into a deep valley, beyond which rise line on line of great mounding hills. These turn blue in the distance and look like immense billows rolling in from a distant ocean.

There were ten children in the Burroughs family, and John was the seventh of this numerous household. He was a true country boy, acquainted with all the hard work and all the pleasures of an old-fashioned farm life. His people were poor and he had his own way to make in the world, but the environment was on the whole a salutary one.

He has always had a marked affection for the place of his birth, and he rejoices in the fact that from an eminence near his present home on the Hudson he can see mountains that are visible from his native hills.

Two or three times every year he goes back to these hills to renew his youth among the familiar scenes of his boyhood.

"Johnny" Burroughs, as he was known to his home folks and the neighbors, was very like the other youngsters of the region in his interests, his ways, and his work. Yet as compared with them he undoubtedly had a livelier imagination, and things made a keener impression on his mind. In some cases his sensitiveness was more disturbing than gratifying. When his grandfather told "spook" stories to the children gathered around the evening blaze of the kitchen fireplace, John's hair would almost stand on end and he was afraid of every shadow.

He went to school in the little red schoolhouse across the valley, and as he grew older he aspired to attend an academy. But he had to make the opportunity for himself, and only succeeded in doing so at the age of seventeen, when he raised the needful money by six months of teaching. This enabled him in the autumn of 1854 to enter the Heading Literary Institute at Ashland. He found the life there enjoyable, but his funds ran low by spring and he was obliged to return to the farm. Until September he labored among his native fields, then took up teaching again. When pay day came he set off for a seminary of some note at Cooperstown, where a single term brought his student days forever to a close, and after another period of farm work at home he borrowed a small sum of money and journeyed to Illinois. Near Freeport he secured a school at forty dollars a month, which was much more than he could have earned in the East. Yet he gave up his position at the end of six months. "I came back,"

he says, "because of 'the girl I left behind me;' and it was pretty hard to stay even as long as I did."

Soon afterward he married. His total capital at the time was fifty dollars, a sum which was reduced one fifth by the wedding expenses. For several years he continued to teach, and at the age of twenty-five we find him in charge of a school near West Point. Up to this time his interest in nature and his aptitude for observation lay dormant. But now it was awakened by reading a volume of Audubon which chanced to fall into his hands. That was a revelation, and he went to the woods with entirely new interest and enthusiasm. He began at once to get acquainted with the birds, his vision grew keen and alert, and birds he had passed by before, he now saw at once.

Meanwhile the Civil War was going on, and it aroused in Burroughs a strong desire to enlist. He visited Washington to get a closer view of army life, but what he saw of it rather damped his military ardor. It seemed to him that the men were driven about and herded like cattle; and when a peaceful position in the Treasury Department was offered him he accepted it, and for nine years was a Government clerk.

At the Treasury he guarded a vault and kept a record of the money that went in or out. The duties were not arduous, and in his long intervals of leisure his mind wandered far afield. It dwelt on the charm of flitting wings and bird melodies, on the pleasures of rambling along country roads and into the woodlands; and, sitting before the Treasury vault, at a high desk and facing an iron wall he began to write. There was no need for notes. His memory was all-sufficient, and the result was the essays which make "Wake-Robin," — his first book.

By 1873 Burroughs had had enough of the routine of a Government clerkship, and he resigned to become the receiver of a bank in Middletown, New York. Later he accepted a position as bank examiner in the eastern part of the State. But his longing to return to the soil was growing apace, and presently he bought a little farm on the west shore of the Hudson. He at once erected a substantial stone house and started orchards and vineyards, yet it was not until 1885 that he felt he could relinquish his Government position and dwell on his own land with the assurance of a safe support.

He has never been a great traveler. Still, he has been abroad twice and has recently made a trip to Alaska. Lesser excursions have taken him to Virginia and Kentucky, and to Canada, and he has camped in Maine and the Adirondacks. But the district that he knows best and that he puts oftenest into his nature studies is his home country in the Catskills and the region about his "Riverby" farm. Very little of his writing, however, has been done in the house in which he lives. This was never a wholly satisfactory working place. He felt he must get away from all conventionalities, and he early put up on the outskirts of his vineyards a little bark-covered study, to which it has been his habit to retire for his indoor thinking and writing. He still uses this study more or less, and often in the summer evenings sits in an easy chair, under an apple-tree just outside the door, and listens to the voices of Nature while he looks off across the Hudson.

But the spot that at present most engages his affection is a reclaimed woodland swamp, back among some rocky hills, a mile or two from the river. A few years ago the swamp was a wild tangle of brush and

stumps, fallen trees and murky pools. Now it has been cleared and drained, and the dark forest mould produces wonderful crops of celery, sweet corn, potatoes, and other vegetables. On a shoulder of rock near the swamp borders Burroughs has built a rustic house, sheathed outside with slabs, and smacking in all its arrangements of the woodlands and of the days of pioneering. It has an open fireplace, where the flames crackle cheerfully on chilly evenings, and over the fireplace coals most of the cooking is done; but in really hot weather an oil stove serves instead.

On the other side of the hollow a delightfully cold spring bubbles forth, and immediately back of the house is a natural cavern which makes an ideal storage place for perishable foods. The descent to the cavern is made by a rude ladder, and the sight of Burroughs coming and going between it and the house has a most suggestive touch of the wild and romantic.

He is often at "Slabsides" — sometimes for weeks or months at a time, though he always makes daily visits to the valley to look after the work in his vineyards and to visit the post-office at the railway station. He is a leisurely man, to whom haste and the nervous pursuit of wealth or fame are totally foreign. He thoroughly enjoys country loitering, and when he gets a hint of anything interesting or new going on among the birds and little creatures of the fields, he likes to stop and investigate. His ears are remarkably quick and his eyes and sense of smell phenomenally acute, and much which to most of us would be unperceived or meaningless he reads as if it were an open book. Best of all, he has the power of imparting his enjoyment, and what he writes is full of outdoor fragrance, racy,

piquant, and individual. His snap and vivacity are wholly unartificial. They are a part of the man — a man full of imagination and sensitiveness, a philosopher, a humorist, a hater of shams and pretension. The tenor of his life changes little from year to year, his affections remain steadfast, and this hardy, gray poet of things rural will continue, as ever, the warm-hearted nature enthusiast, and inspirer of the love of nature in others.

# AFOOT AND AFLOAT

## A SUMMER BOATING TRIP

WHEN one summer day I bethought me of a voyage down the east or Pepacton branch of the Delaware, I seemed to want some excuse for the start, some send-off, some preparation, to give the enterprise genesis and head. This I found in building my own boat. It was a happy thought. How else should I have got under way, how else should I have raised the breeze? The boat-building warmed the blood; it made the germ take; it whetted my appetite for the voyage. There is nothing like serving an apprenticeship to fortune, like earning the right to your tools. In most enterprises the temptation is always to begin too far along; we want to start where somebody else leaves off. Go back to the stump, and see what an impetus you get. Those fishermen who wind their own flies before they go a-fishing, — how they bring in the trout; and those hunters who run their own bullets or make their own cartridges, — the game is already mortgaged to them.

When my boat was finished — and it was a very simple affair — I was eager as a boy to be off; I feared the river would all run by before I could wet her bottom in it. This enthusiasm begat great expectations of the trip. I should surely surprise Nature and win some new secrets from her. I should glide down noiselessly upon her and see what all those willow screens

and baffling curves concealed. As a fisherman and pedestrian I had been able to come at the stream only at certain points: now the most private and secluded retreats of the nymph would be opened to me; every bend and eddy, every cove hedged in by swamps or passage walled in by high alders, would be at the beck of my paddle.

Whom shall one take with him when he goes a-courting Nature? This is always a vital question. There are persons who will stand between you and that which you seek: they obtrude themselves; they monopolize your attention; they blunt your sense of the shy, half-revealed intelligences about you. I want for companion a dog or a boy, or a person who has the virtues of dogs and boys, — transparency, good-nature, curiosity, open sense, and a nameless quality that is akin to trees and growths and the inarticulate forces of nature. With him you are alone, and yet have company; you are free; you feel no disturbing element; the influences of nature stream through him and around him; he is a good conductor of the subtle fluid. The quality or qualification I refer to belongs to most persons who spend their lives in the open air, — to soldiers, hunters, fishers, laborers, and to artists and poets of the right sort. How full of it, to choose an illustrious example, was such a man as Walter Scott!

But no such person came in answer to my prayer, so I set out alone.

It was fit that I put my boat into the water at Arkville, but it may seem a little incongruous that I should launch her into Dry Brook; yet Dry Brook is here a fine large trout stream, and I soon found its waters were wet enough for all practical purposes. The Dela-



ware is only one mile distant, and I chose this as the easiest road from the station to it. A young farmer helped me carry the boat to the water, but did not stay to see me off; only some calves feeding alongshore witnessed my embarkation. It would have been a godsend to boys, but there were no boys about. I stuck on a rift before I had gone ten yards, and saw with misgiving the paint transferred from the bottom of my little scow to the tops of the stones thus early in the journey. But I was soon making fair headway, and taking trout for my dinner as I floated along. My first mishap was when I broke the second joint of my rod on a bass, and the first serious impediment to my progress was when I encountered the trunk of a prostrate elm bridging the stream within a few inches of the surface. My rod mended and the elm cleared, I anticipated better sailing when I should reach the Delaware itself; but I found on this day and on subsequent days that the Delaware has a way of dividing up that is very embarrassing to the navigator. It is a stream of many minds: its waters cannot long agree to go all in the same channel, and whichever branch I took I was pretty sure to wish I had taken one of the others. I was constantly sticking on rifts, where I would have to dismount, or running full tilt into willow banks, where I would lose my hat or endanger my fishing-tackle. On the whole, the result of my first day's voyaging was not encouraging. I made barely eight miles, and my ardor was a good deal dampened, to say nothing about my clothing. In mid-afternoon I went to a well-to-do-looking farmhouse and got some milk, which I am certain the thrifty housewife skimmed, for its blueness infected my spirits, and I went into camp that night

more than half persuaded to abandon the enterprise in the morning. The loneliness of the river, too, unlike that of the fields and woods, to which I was more accustomed, oppressed me. In the woods, things are close to you, and you touch them and seem to interchange something with them; but upon the river, even though it be a narrow and shallow one like this, you are more isolated, farther removed from the soil and its attractions, and an easier prey to the unsocial demons. The long, unpeopled vistas ahead; the still, dark eddies; the endless monotone and soliloquy of the stream; the unheeding rocks basking like monsters along the shore, half out of the water, half in; a solitary heron starting up here and there, as you rounded some point, and flapping disconsolately ahead till lost to view, or standing like a gaunt spectre on the umbrageous side of the mountain, his motionless form revealed against the dark green as you passed; the trees and willows and alders that hemmed you in on either side, and hid the fields and the farmhouses and the road that ran near by,—these things and others aided the skimmed milk to cast a gloom over my spirits that argued ill for the success of my undertaking. Those rubber boots, too, that parboiled my feet and were clogs of lead about them,—whose spirits are elastic enough to endure them? A malediction upon the head of him who invented them! Take your old shoes, that will let the water in and let it out again, rather than stand knee-deep all day in these extinguishers.

I escaped from the river, that first night, and took to the woods, and profited by the change. In the woods I was at home again, and the bed of hemlock boughs salved my spirits. A cold spring run came down off

the mountain, and beside it, underneath birches and hemlocks, I improvised my hearthstone. In sleeping on the ground it is a great advantage to have a back-log; it braces and supports you, and it is a bedfellow that will not grumble when, in the middle of the night, you crowd sharply up against it. It serves to keep in the warmth, also. A heavy stone or other *point de résistance* at your feet is also a help. Or, better still, scoop out a little place in the earth, a few inches deep, so as to admit your body from your hips to your shoulders; you thus get an equal bearing the whole length of you. I am told the Western hunters and guides do this. On the same principle, the sand makes a good bed, and the snow. You make a mould in which you fit nicely. My berth that night was between two logs that the barkpeelers had stripped ten or more years before. As they had left the bark there, and as hemlock bark makes excellent fuel, I had more reasons than one to be grateful to them.

In the morning I felt much refreshed, and as if the night had tided me over the bar that threatened to stay my progress. If I can steer clear of skimmed milk, I said, I shall now finish the voyage of fifty miles to Hancock with increasing pleasure.

When one breaks camp in the morning, he turns back again and again to see what he has left. Surely, he feels, he has forgotten something; what is it? But it is only his own sad thoughts and musings he has left, the fragment of his life he has lived there. Where he hung his coat on the tree, where he slept on the boughs, where he made his coffee or broiled his trout over the coals, where he drank again and again at the little brown pool in the spring run, where he looked long

and long up into the whispering branches overhead, he has left what he cannot bring away with him, — the flame and the ashes of himself.

Of certain game-birds it is thought that at times they have the power of withholding their scent; no hint or particle of themselves goes out upon the air. I think there are persons whose spiritual pores are always sealed up, and I presume they have the best time of it. Their hearts never radiate into the void; they do not yearn and sympathize without return; they do not leave themselves by the wayside as the sheep leaves her wool upon the brambles and thorns.

This branch of the Delaware, so far as I could learn, had never before been descended by a white man in a boat. Rafts of pine and hemlock timber are run down on the spring and fall freshets, but of pleasure-seekers in boats I appeared to be the first. Hence my advent was a surprise to most creatures in the water and out. I surprised the cattle in the field, and those ruminating leg-deep in the water turned their heads at my approach, swallowed their unfinished cuds, and scampered off as if they had seen a spectre. I surprised the fish on their spawning beds and feeding grounds; they scattered, as my shadow glided down upon them, like chickens when a hawk appears. I surprised an ancient fisherman seated on a spit of gravelly beach, with his back up stream, and leisurely angling in a deep, still eddy, and mumbling to himself. As I slid into the circle of his vision his grip on his pole relaxed, his jaw dropped, and he was too bewildered to reply to my salutation for some moments. As I turned a bend in the river I looked back, and saw him hastening away with great precipitation. I pre-

sume he had angled there for forty years without having his privacy thus intruded upon. I surprised hawks and herons and kingfishers. I came suddenly upon muskrats, and raced with them down the rifts, they having no time to take to their holes. At one point, as I rounded an elbow in the stream, a black eagle sprang from the top of a dead tree, and flapped hurriedly away. A kingbird gave chase, and disappeared for some moments in the gulf between the great wings of the eagle, and I imagined him seated upon his back delivering his puny blows upon the royal bird. I interrupted two or three minks fishing and hunting alongshore. They would dart under the bank when they saw me, then presently thrust out their sharp, weasel-like noses, to see if the danger was imminent. At one point, in a little cove behind the willows, I surprised some schoolgirls, with skirts amazingly abbreviated, wading and playing in the water. And as much surprised as any, I am sure, was that hard-worked looking housewife, when I came up from under the bank in front of her house, and with pail in hand appeared at her door and asked for milk, taking the precaution to intimate that I had no objection to the yellow scum that is supposed to rise on a fresh article of that kind.

“What kind of milk do you want?”

“The best you have. Give me two quarts of it,” I replied.

“What do you want to do with it?” with an anxious tone, as if I might want to blow up something or burn her barns with it.

“Oh, drink it,” I answered, as if I frequently put milk to that use.

"Well, I suppose I can get you some;" and she presently reappeared with swimming pail, with those little yellow flakes floating about upon it that one likes to see.

I passed several low dams the second day, but had no trouble. I dismounted and stood upon the apron, and the boat, with plenty of line, came over as lightly as a chip, and swung around in the eddy below like a steed that knows its master. In the afternoon, while slowly drifting down a long eddy, the moist southwest wind brought me the welcome odor of strawberries, and running ashore by a meadow, a short distance below, I was soon parting the daisies and filling my cup with the dead-ripe fruit. Berries, be they red, blue, or black, seem like a special providence to the camper-out; they are luxuries he has not counted on, and I prized these accordingly. Later in the day it threatened rain, and I drew up to shore under the shelter of some thick overhanging hemlocks, and proceeded to eat my berries and milk, glad of an excuse not to delay my lunch longer. While tarrying here I heard young voices up stream, and looking in that direction saw two boys coming down the rapids on rude floats. They were racing along at a lively pace, each with a pole in his hand, dexterously avoiding the rocks and the breakers, and schooling themselves thus early in the duties and perils of the raftsmen. As they saw me one observed to the other, —

"There is the man we saw go by when we were building our floats. If we had known he was coming so far, maybe we could have got him to give us a ride."

They drew near, guided their crafts to shore beside me, and tied up, their poles answering for hawsers.

They proved to be Johnny and Denny Dwire, aged ten and twelve. They were friendly boys, and though not a bit bashful were not a bit impertinent. And Johnny, who did the most of the talking, had such a sweet musical voice; it was like a bird's. It seems Denny had run away a day or two before, to his uncle's five miles above, and Johnny had been after him, and was bringing his prisoner home on a float; and it was hard to tell which was enjoying the fun most, the captor or the captured.

"Why did you run away?" said I to Denny.

"Oh, 'cause," replied he, with an air which said plainly, "The reasons are too numerous to mention."

"Boys, you know, will do so, sometimes," said Johnny, and he smiled upon his brother in a way that made me think they had a very good understanding upon the subject.

They could both swim, yet their floats looked very perilous, — three pieces of old plank or slabs, with two cross-pieces and a fragment of a board for a rider, and made without nails or withes.

"In some places," said Johnny, "one plank was here and another off there, but we managed, somehow, to keep atop of them."

"Let's leave our floats here, and ride with him the rest of the way," said one to the other.

"All right; may we, mister?"

I assented, and we were soon afloat again. How they enjoyed the passage; how smooth it was; how the boat glided along; how quickly she felt the paddle! They admired her much; they praised my steersmanship; they praised my fish-pole and all my fixings down to my hateful rubber boots. When we stuck on the



rifts, as we did several times, they leaped out quickly with their bare feet and legs, and pushed us off.

"I think," said Johnny, "if you keep her straight and let her have her own way, she will find the deepest water. Don't you, Denny?"

"I think she will," replied Denny; and I found the boys were pretty nearly right.

I tried them on a point of natural history. I had observed, coming along, a great many dead eels lying on the bottom of the river, that I supposed had died from spear wounds. "No," said Johnny, "they are lamper-eels. They die as soon as they have built their nests and laid their eggs."

"Are you sure?"

"That's what they all say, and I know they are lampers."

So I fished one up out of the deep water with my paddle-blade and examined it; and sure enough it was a lamprey. There was the row of holes along its head, and its ugly suction mouth. I had noticed their nests, too, all along, where the water in the pools shallowed to a few feet and began to hurry toward the rifts: they were low mounds of small stones, as if a bushel or more of large pebbles had been dumped upon the river bottom; occasionally they were so near the surface as to make a big ripple. The eel attaches itself to the stones by its mouth, and thus moves them at will. An old fisherman told me that a strong man could not pull a large lamprey loose from a rock to which it had attached itself. It fastens to its prey in this way, and sucks the life out. A friend of mine says he once saw in the St. Lawrence a pike as long as his arm with a lamprey eel attached to him. The fish was nearly



dead and was quite white, the eel had so sucked out his blood and substance. The fish, when seized, darts against rocks and stones, and tries in vain to rub the eel off, then succumbs to the sucker.

"The lampers do not all die," said Denny, "because they do not all spawn;" and I observed that the dead ones were all of one size and doubtless of the same age.

The lamprey is the octopus, the devil-fish, of these waters, and there is, perhaps, no tragedy enacted here that equals that of one of these vampires slowly sucking the life out of a bass or a trout.

My boys went to school part of the time. Did they have a good teacher?

"Good enough for me," said Johnny.

"Good enough for me," echoed Denny.

Just below Bark-a-boom — the name is worth keeping — they left me. I was loath to part with them; their musical voices and their thorough good-fellowship had been very acceptable. With a little persuasion, I think they would have left their home and humble fortunes, and gone a-roving with me.

About four o'clock the warm, vapor-laden southwest wind brought forth the expected thunder-shower. I saw the storm rapidly developing behind the mountains in my front. Presently I came in sight of a long covered wooden bridge that spanned the river about a mile ahead, and I put my paddle into the water with all my force to reach this cover before the storm. It was neck and neck most of the way. The storm had the wind, and I had it — in my teeth. The bridge was at Shavertown, and it was by a close shave that I got under it before the rain was upon me. How it poured

and rattled and whipped in around the abutment of the bridge to reach me! I looked out well satisfied upon the foaming water, upon the wet, unpainted houses and barns of the Shavertowners, and upon the trees,

“Caught and cuffed by the gale.”

Another traveler — the spotted-winged nighthawk — was also roughly used by the storm. He faced it bravely, and beat and beat, but was unable to stem it, or even hold his own; gradually he drifted back, till he was lost to sight in the wet obscurity. The water in the river rose an inch while I waited, about three quarters of an hour. Only one man, I reckon, saw me in Shavertown, and he came and gossiped with me from the bank above when the storm had abated.

The second night I stopped at the sign of the elm-tree. The woods were too wet, and I concluded to make my boat my bed. A superb elm, on a smooth grassy plain a few feet from the water's edge, looked hospitable in the twilight, and I drew my boat up beneath it. I hung my clothes on the jagged edges of its rough bark, and went to bed with the moon, “in her third quarter,” peeping under the branches upon me. I had been reading Stevenson's amusing “Travels with a Donkey,” and the lines he pretends to quote from an old play kept running in my head: —

“The bed was made, the room was fit,  
By punctual eve the stars were lit;  
The air was sweet, the water ran;  
No need was there for maid or man,  
When we put up, my ass and I,  
At God's green caravanserai.”

But the stately elm played me a trick: it slyly and at long intervals let great drops of water down upon me,

now with a sharp smack upon my rubber coat; then with a heavy thud upon the seat in the bow or stern of my boat; then plump into my upturned ear, or upon my uncovered arm, or with a ring into my tin cup, or with a splash into my coffee-pail that stood at my side full of water from a spring I had just passed. After two hours' trial I found dropping off to sleep, under such circumstances, was out of the question; so I sprang up, in no very amiable mood toward my host, and drew my boat clean from under the elm. I had refreshing slumber thenceforth, and the birds were astir in the morning long before I was.

There is one way, at least, in which the denuding the country of its forests has lessened the rainfall: in certain conditions of the atmosphere every tree is a great condenser of moisture, as I had just observed in the case of the old elm; little showers are generated in their branches, and in the aggregate the amount of water precipitated in this way is considerable. Of a foggy summer morning one may see little puddles of water standing on the stones beneath maple-trees, along the street; and in winter, when there is a sudden change from cold to warm, with fog, the water fairly runs down the trunks of the trees, and streams from their naked branches. The temperature of the tree is so much below that of the atmosphere in such cases that the condensation is very rapid. In lieu of these arboreal rains we have the dew upon the grass, but it is doubtful if the grass ever drips as does a tree.

The birds, I say, were astir in the morning before I was, and some of them were more wakeful through the night, unless they sing in their dreams. At this season one may hear at intervals numerous bird voices

during the night. The whip-poor-will was piping when I lay down, and I still heard one when I woke up after midnight. I heard the song sparrow and the kingbird also, like watchers calling the hour, and several times I heard the cuckoo. Indeed, I am convinced that our cuckoo is to a considerable extent a night bird, and that he moves about freely from tree to tree. His peculiar guttural note, now here, now there, may be heard almost any summer night, in any part of the country, and occasionally his better known cuckoo call. He is a great recluse by day, but seems to wander abroad freely by night.

The birds do indeed begin with the day. The farmer who is in the field at work while he can yet see stars catches their first matin hymns. In the longest June days the robin strikes up about half past three o'clock, and is quickly followed by the song sparrow, the oriole, the catbird, the wren, the wood thrush, and all the rest of the tuneful choir. Along the Potomac I have heard the Virginia cardinal whistle so loudly and persistently in the treetops above, that sleeping after four o'clock was out of the question. Just before the sun is up, there is a marked lull, during which, I imagine, the birds are at breakfast. While building their nest, it is very early in the morning that they put in their big strokes; the back of their day's work is broken before you have begun yours.

A lady once asked me if there was any individuality among the birds, or if those of the same kind were as near alike as two peas. I was obliged to answer that to the eye those of the same species *were* as near alike as two peas, but that in their songs there were often marks of originality. Caged or domesticated birds

develop notes and traits of their own, and among the more familiar orchard and garden birds one may notice the same tendency. I observe a great variety of songs, and even qualities of voice, among the orioles and among the song sparrows. On this trip my ear was especially attracted to some striking and original sparrow songs. At one point I was half afraid I had let pass an opportunity to identify a new warbler, but finally concluded it was a song sparrow. On another occasion I used to hear day after day a sparrow that appeared to have some organic defect in its voice: part of its song was scarcely above a whisper, as if the bird was suffering from a very bad cold. I have heard a bobolink and a hermit thrush with similar defects of voice. I have heard a robin with a part of the whistle of the quail in his song. It was out of time and out of tune, but the robin seemed insensible of the incongruity, and sang as loudly and as joyously as any of his mates. A catbird will sometimes show a special genius for mimicry, and I have known one to suggest very plainly some notes of the bobolink.

There are numerous long covered bridges spanning the Delaware, and under some of these I saw the cliff swallow at home, the nests being fastened to the under sides of the timbers, — as it were, suspended from the ceiling instead of being planted upon the shelving or perpendicular side, as is usual with them. To have laid the foundation, indeed, to have sprung the vault downward and finished it successfully, must have required special engineering skill. I had never before seen or heard of these nests being so placed. But birds are quick to adjust their needs to the exigencies of any case. Not long before, I had seen in a deserted house,

on the head of the Rondout, the chimney swallows entering the chamber through a stove-pipe hole in the roof, and gluing their nests to the sides of the rafters, like the barn swallows.

I was now, on the third day, well down in the wilds of Colchester, with a current that made between two and three miles an hour, — just a summer idler's pace. The atmosphere of the river had improved much since the first day, — was, indeed, without taint, — and the water was sweet and good. There were farm-houses at intervals of a mile or so; but the amount of tillable land in the river valley or on the adjacent mountains was very small. Occasionally there would be forty or fifty acres of flat, usually in grass or corn, with a thrifty looking farmhouse. One could see how surely the land made the house and its surroundings; good land bearing good buildings, and poor land poor.

In mid-forenoon I reached the long placid eddy at Downsville, and here again fell in with two boys. They were out paddling about in a boat when I drew near, and they evidently regarded me in the light of a rare prize which fortune had wafted them.

"Ain't you glad we come, Benny?" I heard one of them observe to the other, as they were conducting me to the best place to land. They were bright, good boys, off the same piece as my acquaintances of the day before, and about the same ages, — differing only in being village boys. With what curiosity they looked me over! Where had I come from; where was I going; how long had I been on the way; who built my boat; was I a carpenter, to build such a neat craft, etc.? They never had seen such a traveler before. Had I had no mishaps? And then they bethought them of the

dangerous passes that awaited me, and in good faith began to warn and advise me. They had heard the tales of raftsmen, and had conceived a vivid idea of the perils of the river below, gauging their notions of it from the spring and fall freshets tossing about the heavy and cumbrous rafts. There was a whirlpool, a rock eddy, and a binocle within a mile. I might be caught in the binocle, or engulfed in the whirlpool, or smashed up in the eddy. But I felt much reassured when they told me I had already passed several whirlpools and rock eddies; but that terrible binocle, — what was that? I had never heard of such a monster. Oh, it was a still, miry place at the head of a big eddy. The current might carry me up there, but I could easily get out again; the rafts did. But there was another place I must beware of, where two eddies faced each other; raftsmen were sometimes swept off there by the oars and drowned. And when I came to rock eddy, which I would know, because the river divided there (a part of the water being afraid to risk the eddy, I suppose), I must go ashore and survey the pass; but in any case it would be prudent to keep to the left. I might stick on the rift, but that was nothing to being wrecked upon those rocks. The boys were quite in earnest, and I told them I would walk up to the village and post some letters to my friends before I braved all these dangers. So they marched me up the street, pointing out to their chums what they had found.

“Going way to Phil— What place is that near where the river goes into the sea?”

“Philadelphia?”

“Yes; thinks he may go way there. Won’t he have fun?”



The boys escorted me about the town, then back to the river, and got in their boat and came down to the bend, where they could see me go through the whirlpool and pass the binocle (I am not sure about the orthography of the word, but I suppose it means a double, or a sort of mock eddy). I looked back as I shot over the rough current beside a gentle vortex, and saw them watching me with great interest. Rock eddy, also, was quite harmless, and I passed it without any preliminary survey.

I nooned at Sodom, and found good milk in a humble cottage. In the afternoon I was amused by a great blue heron that kept flying up in advance of me. Every mile or so, as I rounded some point, I would come unexpectedly upon him, till finally he grew disgusted with my silent pursuit, and took a long turn to the left up along the side of the mountain, and passed back up the river, uttering a hoarse, low note.

The wind still boded rain, and about four o'clock, announced by deep-toned thunder and portentous clouds, it began to charge down the mountain-side in front of me. I ran ashore, covered my traps, and took my way up through an orchard to a quaint little farmhouse. But there was not a soul about, outside or in, that I could find, though the door was unfastened; so I went into an open shed with the hens, and lounged upon some straw, while the unloosed floods came down. It was better than boating or fishing. Indeed, there are few summer pleasures to be placed before that of reclining at ease directly under a sloping roof, after toil or travel in the hot sun, and looking out into the rain-drenched air and fields. It is such a vital yet soothing spectacle. We sympathize with the earth.



We know how good a bath is, and the unspeakable deliciousness of water to a parched tongue. The office of the sunshine is slow, subtle, occult, unsuspected; but when the clouds do their work the benefaction is so palpable and copious, so direct and wholesale, that all creatures take note of it, and for the most part rejoice in it. It is a completion, a consummation, a paying of a debt with a royal hand; the measure is heaped and overflowing. It was the simple vapor of water that the clouds borrowed of the earth; now they pay back more than water: the drops are charged with electricity and with the gases of the air, and have new solvent powers. Then, how the slate is sponged off, and left all clean and new again!

In the shed where I was sheltered were many relics and odds and ends of the farm. In juxtaposition with two of the most stalwart wagon or truck wheels I ever looked upon, was a cradle of ancient and peculiar make, — an aristocratic cradle, with high-turned posts and an elaborately carved and moulded body, that was suspended upon rods and swung from the top. How I should have liked to hear its history and the story of the lives it had rocked, as the rain sang and the boughs tossed without! Above it was the cradle of a phœbe-bird saddled upon a stick that ran behind the rafter; its occupants had not flown, and its story was easy to read.

Soon after the first shock of the storm was over, and before I could see breaking sky, the birds tuned up with new ardor, — the robin, the indigo-bird, the purple finch, the song sparrow, and in the meadow below the bobolink. The cockerel near me followed suit, and repeated his refrain till my meditations were

so disturbed that I was compelled to eject him from the cover, albeit he had the best right there. But he crowed his defiance with drooping tail from the yard in front. I, too, had mentally crowed over the good fortune of the shower; but before I closed my eyes that night my crest was a good deal fallen, and I could have wished the friendly elements had not squared their accounts quite so readily and uproariously.

The one shower did not exhaust the supply a bit; Nature's hand was full of trumps yet, — yea, and her sleeve, too. I stopped at a trout brook, which came down out of the mountains on the right, and took a few trout for my supper; but its current was too roily from the shower for fly-fishing. Another farmhouse attracted me, but there was no one at home; so I picked a quart of strawberries in the meadow in front, not minding the wet grass, and about six o'clock, thinking another storm that had been threatening on my right had miscarried, I pushed off, and went floating down into the deepening gloom of the river valley. The mountains, densely wooded from base to summit, shut in the view on every hand. They cut in from the right and from the left, one ahead of the other, matching like the teeth of an enormous trap; the river was caught and bent, but not long detained, by them. Presently I saw the rain creeping slowly over them in my rear, for the wind had changed; but I apprehended nothing but a moderate sundown drizzle, such as we often get from the tail end of a shower, and drew up in the eddy of a big rock under an overhanging tree till it should have passed. But it did ~~not~~ pass; it thickened and deepened, and reached a steady pour by the time I had calculated the sun would be gilding the mountain-tops. I

had wrapped my rubber coat about my blankets and groceries, and bared my back to the storm. In sullen silence I saw the night settling down and the rain increasing; my roof-tree gave way, and every leaf poured its accumulated drops upon me. There were streams and splashes where before there had been little more than a mist. I was getting well soaked and uncomplimentary in my remarks on the weather. A saucy catbird, near by, flirted and squealed very plainly, "There! there! What did I tell you! what did I tell you! Pretty pickle! pretty pickle! pretty pickle to be in!" But I had been in worse pickles, though if the water had been salt my pickling had been pretty thorough. Seeing the wind was in the northeast, and that the weather had fairly stolen a march on me, I let go my hold of the tree, and paddled rapidly to the opposite shore, which was low and pebbly, drew my boat up on a little peninsula, turned her over upon a spot which I cleared of its coarser stone, propped up one end with the seat, and crept beneath. I would now test the virtues of my craft as a roof, and I found she was without flaw, though she was pretty narrow. The tension of her timber was such that the rain upon her bottom made a low, musical hum.

Crouched on my blankets and boughs, — for I had gathered a good supply of the latter before the rain overtook me, — and dry only about my middle, I placidly took life as it came. A great blue heron flew by, and let off something like ironical horse laughter. Before it became dark I proceeded to eat my supper, — my berries, but not my trout. What a fuss we make about the "hulls" upon strawberries! We are hyper-critical; we may yet be glad to dine off the hulls alone.

Some people see something to pick and carp at in every good that comes to them; I was thankful that I had the berries, and resolutely ignored their little scalloped ruffles, which I found pleased the eye and did not disturb the palate.

When bedtime arrived, I found undressing a little awkward, my berth was so low; there was plenty of room in the aisle, and the other passengers were nowhere to be seen, but I did not venture out. It rained nearly all night, but the train made good speed, and reached the land of daybreak nearly on time. The water in the river had crept up during the night to within a few inches of my boat, but I rolled over and took another nap, all the same. Then I arose, had a delicious bath in the sweet, swift-running current, and turned my thoughts toward breakfast. The making of the coffee was the only serious problem. With everything soaked and a fine rain still falling, how shall one build a fire? I made my way to a little island above in quest of driftwood. Before I had found the wood I chanced upon another patch of delicious wild strawberries, and took an appetizer of them out of hand. Presently I picked up a yellow birch stick the size of my arm. The wood was decayed, but the bark was perfect. I broke it in two, punched out the rotten wood, and had the bark intact. The fatty or resinous substance in this bark preserves it, and makes it excellent kindling. With some seasoned twigs and a scrap of paper I soon had a fire going that answered my every purpose. More berries were picked while the coffee was brewing, and the breakfast was a success.

The camper-out often finds himself in what seems a distressing predicament to people seated in their

snug, well-ordered houses; but there is often a real satisfaction when things come to their worst, — a satisfaction in seeing what a small matter it is, after all; that one is really neither sugar nor salt, to be afraid of the wet; and that life is just as well worth living beneath a scow or a dug-out as beneath the highest and broadest roof in Christendom.

By ten o'clock it became necessary to move, on account of the rise of the water, and as the rain had abated I picked up and continued my journey. Before long, however, the rain increased again, and I took refuge in a barn. The snug, tree-embowered farmhouse looked very inviting, just across the road from the barn; but as no one was about, and no faces appeared at the window that I might judge of the inmates, I contented myself with the hospitality the barn offered, filling my pockets with some dry birch shavings I found there where the farmer had made an ox-yoke, against the needs of the next kindling.

After an hour's detention I was off again. I stopped at Baxter's Brook, which flows hard by the classic hamlet of Harvard, and tried for trout, but with poor success, as I did not think it worth while to go far up stream.

At several points I saw rafts of hemlock lumber tied to the shore, ready to take advantage of the first freshet. Rafting is an important industry for a hundred miles or more along the Delaware. The lumbermen sometimes take their families or friends, and have a jollification all the way to Trenton or to Philadelphia. In some places the speed is very great, almost equaling that of an express train. The passage of such places as Cochection Falls and "Foul Rift" is attended with

no little danger. The raft is guided by two immense oars, one before and one behind. I frequently saw these huge implements in the driftwood alongshore, suggesting some colossal race of men. The raftsmen have names of their own. From the upper Delaware, where I had set in, small rafts are run down which they call "colts." They come frisking down at a lively pace. At Hancock they usually couple two rafts together, when I suppose they have a span of colts; or do two colts make one horse? Some parts of the framework of the raft they call "grubs;" much depends upon these grubs. The lumbermen were and are a hardy, virile race. The Hon. Charles Knapp, of Deposit, now eighty-three years of age, but with the look and step of a man of sixty, told me he had stood nearly all one December day in the water to his waist, reconstructing his raft, which had gone to pieces on the head of an island. Mr. Knapp had passed the first half of his life in Colchester and Hancock, and, although no sportsman, had once taken part in a great bear hunt there. The bear was an enormous one, and was hard pressed by a gang of men and dogs. Their muskets and assaults upon the beast with clubs had made no impression. Mr. Knapp saw where the bear was coming, and he thought he would show them how easy it was to dispatch a bear with a club, if you only knew where to strike. He had seen how quickly the largest hog would wilt beneath a slight blow across the "small of the back." So, armed with an immense handspike, he took up a position by a large rock that the bear must pass. On she came, panting and nearly exhausted, and at the right moment down came the club with great force upon the small of her back. "If

a fly had alighted upon her," said Mr. Knapp, "I think she would have paid just as much attention to it as she did to me."

Early in the afternoon I encountered another boy, Henry Ingersoll, who was so surprised by my sudden and unwonted appearance that he did not know east from west. "Which way is west?" I inquired, to see if my own head was straight on the subject.

"That way," he said, indicating east within a few degrees.

"You are wrong," I replied. "Where does the sun rise?"

"There," he said, pointing almost in the direction he had pointed before.

"But does not the sun rise in the east here as well as elsewhere?" I rejoined.

"Well, they call that west, anyhow."

But Henry's needle was subjected to a disturbing influence just then. His house was near the river, and he was its sole guardian and keeper for the time; his father had gone up to the next neighbor's (it was Sunday), and his sister had gone with the schoolmistress down the road to get black birch. He came out in the road, with wide eyes, to view me as I passed, when I drew rein, and demanded the points of the compass, as above. Then I shook my sooty pail at him and asked for milk. Yes, I could have some milk, but I would have to wait till his sister came back; after he had recovered a little, he concluded he could get it. He came for my pail, and then his boyish curiosity appeared. My story interested him immensely. He had seen twelve summers, but he had only been four miles from home up and down the river: he had been down



to the East Branch, and he had been up to Trout Brook. He took a pecuniary interest in me. What did my pole cost? What my rubber coat, and what my revolver? The latter he must take in his hand; he had never seen such a thing to shoot with before in *his* life, etc. He thought I might make the trip cheaper and easier by stage and by the cars. He went to school: there were six scholars in summer, one or two more in winter. The population is not crowded in the town of Hancock, certainly, and never will be. The people live close to the bone, as Thoreau would say, or rather close to the stump. Many years ago the young men there resolved upon having a ball. They concluded not to go to a hotel, on account of the expense, and so chose a private house. There was a man in the neighborhood who could play the fife; he offered to furnish the music for seventy-five cents. But this was deemed too much, so one of the party agreed to whistle. History does not tell how many beaux there were bent upon this reckless enterprise, but there were three girls. For refreshments they bought a couple of gallons of whiskey and a few pounds of sugar. When the spree was over, and the expenses were reckoned up, there was a shilling — a York shilling — apiece to pay. Some of the revelers were dissatisfied with this charge, and intimated that the managers had not counted themselves in, but taxed the whole expense upon the rest of the party.

As I moved on I saw Henry's sister and the school-mistress picking their way along the muddy road near the river's bank. One of them saw me, and, dropping her skirts, said to the other (I could read the motions), "See that man!" The other lowered her flounces, and looked up and down the road, then glanced over



into the field, and lastly out upon the river. They paused and had a good look at me, though I could see that their impulse to run away, like that of a frightened deer, was strong.

At the East Branch the Big Beaver Kill joins the Delaware, almost doubling its volume. Here I struck the railroad, the forlorn Midland, and here another set of men and manners cropped out, — what may be called the railroad conglomerate overlying this mountain freestone.

“Where did you steal that boat?” and “What you running away for?” greeted me from a hand-car that went by.

I paused for some time and watched the fish hawks, or ospreys, of which there were nearly a dozen sailing about above the junction of the two streams, squealing and diving, and occasionally striking a fish on the rifts. I am convinced that the fish hawk sometimes feeds on the wing. I saw him do it on this and on another occasion. He raises himself by a peculiar motion, and brings his head and his talons together, and apparently takes a bite of a fish. While doing this his flight presents a sharply undulating line; at the crest of each rise the morsel is taken.

In a long, deep eddy under the west shore I came upon a brood of wild ducks, the hooded merganser. The young were about half grown, but of course entirely destitute of plumage. They started off at great speed, kicking the water into foam behind them, the mother duck keeping upon their flank and rear. Near the outlet of the pool I saw them go ashore, and I expected they would conceal themselves in the woods; but as I drew near the place they came out, and I saw

by their motions they were going to make a rush by me up stream. At a signal from the old one, on they came, and passed within a few feet of me. It was almost incredible, the speed they made. Their pink feet were like swiftly revolving wheels placed a little to the rear; their breasts just skimmed the surface, and the water was beaten into spray behind them. They had no need of wings; even the mother bird did not use hers; a steamboat could hardly have kept up with them. I dropped my paddle and cheered. They kept the race up for a long distance, and I saw them making a fresh spurt as I entered upon the rift and dropped quickly out of sight. I next disturbed an eagle in his meditations upon a dead treetop, and a cat sprang out of some weeds near the foot of the tree. Was he watching for puss, while she was watching for some smaller prey?

I passed Partridge Island — which is or used to be the name of a post-office — unwittingly, and encamped for the night on an island near Hawk's Point. I slept in my boat on the beach, and in the morning my locks were literally wet with the dews of the night, and my blankets too; so I waited for the sun to dry them. As I was gathering driftwood for a fire, a voice came over from the shadows of the east shore: "Seems to me you lay abed pretty late!"

"I call this early," I rejoined, glancing at the sun.

"Wall, it may be airy in the forenoon, but it ain't airy in the mornin';" a distinction I was forced to admit. Before I had reëmbarked some cows came down to the shore, and I watched them ford the river to the island. They did it with great ease and precision. I was told they will sometimes, during high water,

swim over to the islands, striking in well up stream, and swimming diagonally across. At one point some cattle had crossed the river, and evidently got into mischief, for a large dog rushed them down the bank into the current, and worried them all the way over, part of the time swimming and part of the time leaping very high, as a dog will in deep snow, coming down with a great splash. The cattle were shrouded with spray as they ran, and altogether it was a novel picture.

My voyage ended that forenoon at Hancock, and was crowned by a few idyllic days with some friends in their cottage in the woods by Lake Oquaga, a body of crystal water on the hills near Deposit, and a haven as peaceful and perfect as voyager ever came to port in.

## CAMPING WITH THE PRESIDENT

AT the time I made the trip to Yellowstone Park with President Roosevelt in the spring of 1903, I promised some friends to write up my impressions of the President and of the Park, but I have been slow in getting around to it. The President himself, having the absolute leisure and peace of the White House, wrote his account of the trip nearly two years ago! But with the stress and strain of my life at "Slabsides," — administering the affairs of so many of the wild creatures of the woods about me, — I have not till this blessed season found the time to put on record an account of the most interesting thing I saw in that wonderful land, which, of course, was the President himself.

When I accepted his invitation I was well aware that during the journey I should be in a storm centre most of the time, which is not always a pleasant prospect to a man of my habits and disposition. The President himself is a good deal of a storm, — a man of such abounding energy and ceaseless activity that he sets everything in motion around him wherever he goes. But I knew he would be pretty well occupied on his way to the Park in speaking to eager throngs and in receiving personal and political homage in the towns and cities we were to pass through. But when all this was over, and I found myself with him in the wilderness of the Park, with only the superintendent and a few attendants to help take up his tremendous

personal impact, how was it likely to fare with a non-strenuous person like myself, I asked? I had visions of snow six and seven feet deep where traveling could be done only upon snowshoes, and I had never had the things on my feet in my life. If the infernal fires beneath, that keep the pot boiling so out there, should melt the snows, I could see the party tearing along on horseback at a wolf-hunt pace over a rough country; and as I had not been on a horse's back since the President was born, how would it be likely to fare with me there?

I had known the President several years before he became famous, and we had had some correspondence on subjects of natural history. His interest in such themes is always very fresh and keen, and the main motive of his visit to the Park at this time was to see and study in its semi-domesticated condition the great game which he had so often hunted during his ranch days; and he was kind enough to think it would be an additional pleasure to see it with a nature-lover like myself. For my own part, I knew nothing about big game, but I knew there was no man in the country with whom I should so like to see it as Roosevelt.

Some of our newspapers reported that the President intended to hunt in the Park. A woman in Vermont wrote me, to protest against the hunting, and hoped I would teach the President to love the animals as much as I did, — as if he did not love them much more, because his love is founded upon knowledge, and because they had been a part of his life. She did not know that I was then cherishing the secret hope that I might be allowed to shoot a cougar or bobcat; but this fun did not come to me. The President said,

"I will not fire a gun in the Park; then I shall have no explanations to make." Yet once I did hear him say in the wilderness, "I feel as if I ought to keep the camp in meat. I always have." I regretted that he could not do so on this occasion.

I have never been disturbed by the President's hunting trips. It is to such men as he that the big game legitimately belongs, — men who regard it from the point of view of the naturalist as well as from that of the sportsman, who are interested in its preservation, and who share with the world the delight they experience in the chase. Such a hunter as Roosevelt is as far removed from the game-butcher as day is from night; and as for his killing of the "varmints," — bears, cougars, and bobcats, — the fewer of these there are, the better for the useful and beautiful game.

The cougars, or mountain lions, in the Park certainly needed killing. The superintendent reported that he had seen where they had slain nineteen elk, and we saw where they had killed a deer, and dragged its body across the trail. Of course, the President would not now on his hunting trips shoot an elk or a deer except to "keep the camp in meat," and for this purpose it is as legitimate as to slay a sheep or a steer for the table at home.

We left Washington on April 1, and strung several of the larger Western cities on our thread of travel, — Chicago, Milwaukee, Madison, St. Paul, Minneapolis, — as well as many lesser towns, in each of which the President made an address, sometimes brief, on a few occasions of an hour or more.

He gave himself very freely and heartily to the people wherever he went. He could easily match their





**THE YELLOWSTONE RIVER AND CANYON.**

From stereograph, copyright 1904, by Underwood & Underwood, New York.





Western cordiality and good-fellowship. Wherever his train stopped, crowds soon gathered, or had already gathered, to welcome him. His advent made a holiday in each town he visited. At all the principal stops the usual programme was: first, his reception by the committee of citizens appointed to receive him, — they usually boarded his private car, and were one by one introduced to him; then a drive through the town with a concourse of carriages; then to the hall or open air platform, where he spoke to the assembled throng; then to lunch or dinner; and then back to the train, and off for the next stop — a round of hand-shaking, carriage-driving, speech-making each day. He usually spoke from eight to ten times every twenty-four hours, sometimes for only a few minutes from the rear platform of his private car, at others for an hour or more in some large hall. In Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul, elaborate banquets were given him and his party, and on each occasion he delivered a carefully prepared speech upon questions that involved the policy of his administration. The throng that greeted him in the vast Auditorium in Chicago — that rose and waved and waved again — was one of the grandest human spectacles I ever witnessed.

In Milwaukee the dense cloud of tobacco smoke that presently filled the large hall after the feasting was over was enough to choke any speaker, but it did not seem to choke the President, though he does not use tobacco in any form himself; nor was there anything foggy about his utterances on that occasion upon legislative control of the trusts.

In St. Paul the city was inundated with humanity, — a vast human tide that left the middle of the streets

bare as our line of carriages moved slowly along, but that rose up in solid walls of town and prairie humanity on the sidewalks and city dooryards. How hearty and happy the myriad faces looked! At one point I spied in the throng on the curbstone a large silk banner that bore my own name as the title of some society. I presently saw that it was borne by half a dozen anxious and expectant-looking schoolgirls with braids down their backs. As my carriage drew near them, they pressed their way through the throng, and threw a large bouquet of flowers into my lap. I think it would be hard to say who blushed the deeper, the girls or myself. It was the first time I had ever had flowers showered upon me in public; and then, maybe, I felt that on such an occasion I was only a minor side issue, and public recognition was not called for. But the incident pleased the President. "I saw that banner and those flowers," he said afterwards; "and I was delighted to see you honored that way." But I fear I have not to this day thanked the Monroe School of St. Paul for that pretty attention.

The time of the passing of the presidential train seemed well known, even on the Dakota prairies. At one point I remember a little brown schoolhouse stood not far off, and near the track the schoolma'am, with her flock, drawn up in line. We were at luncheon, but the President caught a glimpse ahead through the window, and quickly took in the situation. With napkin in hand, he rushed out on the platform and waved to them. "Those children," he said, as he came back, "wanted to see the President of the United States, and I could not disappoint them. They may never have another chance. What a deep impression such things make when we are young!"

At some point in the Dakotas we picked up the former foreman of his ranch, and another cowboy friend of the old days, and they rode with the President in his private car for several hours. He was as happy with them as a schoolboy ever was in meeting old chums. He beamed with delight all over. The life which those men represented, and of which he had himself once formed a part, meant so much to him; it had entered into the very marrow of his being, and I could see the joy of it all shining in his face as he sat and lived parts of it over again with those men that day. He bubbled with laughter continually. The men, I thought, seemed a little embarrassed by his open-handed cordiality and good-fellowship. He himself evidently wanted to forget the present, and to live only in the memory of those wonderful ranch days, — that free, hardy, adventurous life upon the plains. It all came back to him with a rush when he found himself alone with these heroes of the rope and the stirrup. How much more keen his appreciation was, and how much quicker his memory, than theirs! He was constantly recalling to their minds incidents which they had forgotten, and the names of horses and dogs which had escaped them. His subsequent life, instead of making dim the memory of his ranch days, seemed to have made it more vivid by contrast.

When they had gone, I said to him, "I think your affection for those men very beautiful."

"How could I help it?" he said.

"Still, few men in your station could or would go back and renew such friendships."

"Then I pity them," he replied.

He said afterwards that his ranch life had been the

making of him. It had built him up and hardened him physically, and it had opened his eyes to the wealth of manly character among the plainsmen and cattlemen.

Had he not gone West, he said, he never would have raised the Rough Riders Regiment; and had he not raised that regiment and gone to the Cuban War, he would not have been made governor of New York; and had not this happened, the politicians would not unwittingly have made his rise to the Presidency so inevitable. There is no doubt, I think, that he would have got there some day; but without the chain of events above outlined, his rise could not have been so rapid.

Our train entered the Bad Lands of North Dakota in the early evening twilight, and the President stood on the rear platform of his car, gazing wistfully upon the scene. "I know all this country like a book," he said. "I have ridden over it, and hunted over it, and tramped over it, in all seasons and weather, and it looks like home to me. My old ranch is not far off. We shall soon reach Medora, which was my station." It was plain to see that that strange, forbidding-looking landscape, hills and valleys to Eastern eyes utterly demoralized and gone to the bad, — flayed, fantastic, treeless, a riot of naked clay slopes, chimney-like buttes, and dry coulees, — was in his eyes a land of almost pathetic interest. There were streaks of good pasturage here and there where his cattle used to graze, and where the deer and the pronghorn used to linger.

When we reached Medora, where the train was scheduled to stop an hour, it was nearly dark, but the whole town and country round had turned out to wel-

come their old townsman. After much hand-shaking, the committee conducted us down to a little hall, where the President stood on a low platform, and made a short address to the standing crowd that filled the place. Then some flashlight pictures were taken by the local photographer, after which the President stepped down, and, while the people filed past him, shook hands with every man, woman, and child of them, calling many of them by name, and greeting them all most cordially. I recall one grizzled old frontiersman whose hand he grasped, calling him by name, and saying, "How well I remember you! You once mended my gunlock for me, — put on a new hammer." "Yes," said the delighted old fellow; "I'm the man, Mr. President." He was among his old neighbors once more, and the pleasure of the meeting was very obvious on both sides. I heard one of the women tell him they were going to have a dance presently, and ask him if he would not stay and open it! The President laughingly excused himself, and said his train had to leave on schedule time, and his time was nearly up. I thought of the incident in his "Ranch Life," in which he says he once opened a cowboy ball with the wife of a Minnesota man, who had recently shot a bullying Scotchman who danced opposite. He says the scene reminded him of the ball where Bret Harte's heroine "went down the middle with the man that shot Sandy Magee."

Before reaching Medora he had told me many anecdotes of "Roaring Bill Jones," and had said I should see him. But it turned out that Roaring Bill had begun to celebrate the coming of the President too early in the day, and when we reached Medora he was not

in a presentable condition. I forget now how he had earned his name, but no doubt he had come honestly by it; it was a part of his history, as was that of "The Pike," "Cold Turkey Bill," "Hash Knife Joe," and other classic heroes of the frontier.

It is curious how certain things go to the bad in the Far West, or a certain proportion of them, — bad lands, bad horses, and bad men. And it is a degree of badness that the East has no conception of, — land that looks as raw and unnatural as if time had never laid its shaping and softening hand upon it; horses that, when mounted, put their heads to the ground and their heels in the air, and, squealing defiantly, resort to the most diabolically ingenious tricks to shake off or to kill their riders; and men who amuse themselves in bar-rooms by shooting about the feet of a "tenderfoot" to make him dance, or who ride along the street and shoot at every one in sight. Just as the old plutonic fires come to the surface out there in the Rockies, and hint very strongly of the infernal regions, so a kind of satanic element in men and animals — an underlying devilishness — crops out, and we have the border ruffian and the bucking broncho.

The President told of an Englishman on a hunting trip in the West, who, being an expert horseman at home, scorned the idea that he could not ride any of their "grass-fed ponies." So they gave him a bucking broncho. He was soon lying on the ground, much stunned. When he could speak, he said, "I should not have minded him, you know, *but 'e 'ides 'is 'cad.*"

At one place in Dakota the train stopped to take water while we were at lunch. A crowd soon gathered, and the President went out to greet them. We could



hear his voice, and the cheers and laughter of the crowd. And then we heard him say, "Well, good-by, I must go now." Still he did not come. Then we heard more talking and laughing, and another "good-by," and yet he did not come. Then I went out to see what had happened. I found the President down on the ground shaking hands with the whole lot of them. Some one had reached up to shake his hand as he was about withdrawing, and this had been followed by such eagerness on the part of the rest of the people to do likewise, that the President had instantly got down to gratify them. Had the secret service men known it, they would have been in a pickle. We probably have never had a President who responded more freely and heartily to the popular liking for him than Roosevelt. The crowd always seem to be in love with him the moment they see him and hear his voice. And it is not by reason of any arts of eloquence, or charm of address, but by reason of his inborn heartiness and sincerity, and his genuine manliness. The people feel his quality at once. In Bermuda last winter I met a Catholic priest who had sat on the platform at some place in New England very near the President while he was speaking, and who said, "The man had not spoken three minutes before I loved him, and had any one tried to molest him, I could have torn him to pieces." It is the quality in the man that instantly inspires such a liking as this in strangers that will, I am sure, safeguard him in all public places.

I once heard him say that he did not like to be addressed as "His Excellency;" he added laughingly, "They might just as well call me His Transparency, for all I care." It is this transparency, this direct,

out-and-out, unequivocal character of him that is one source of his popularity. The people do love transparency, — all of them but the politicians.

A friend of his one day took him to task for some mistake he had made in one of his appointments. "My dear sir," replied the President, "where you know of one mistake I have made, I know of ten." How such candor must make the politicians shiver!

I have said that I stood in dread of the necessity of snowshoeing in the Park, and, in lieu of that, of horse-back riding. Yet when we reached Gardiner, the entrance to the Park, on that bright, crisp April morning, with no snow in sight save that on the mountain-tops, and found Major Pitcher and Captain Chittenden at the head of a squad of soldiers, with a fine saddle-horse for the President, and an ambulance drawn by two span of mules for me, I confess that I experienced just a slight shade of mortification. I thought they might have given me the option of the saddle or the ambulance. Yet I entered the vehicle as if it was just what I had been expecting.

The President and his escort, with a cloud of cowboys hovering in the rear, were soon off at a lively pace, and my ambulance followed close, and at a lively pace, too; so lively that I soon found myself gripping the seat with my hands. "Well," I said to myself, "they are giving me a regular Western send-off;" and I thought, as the ambulance swayed from side to side, that it would suit me just as well if my driver did not try to keep up with the presidential procession. The driver and his mules were shut off from me by a curtain, but, looking ahead out of the sides of the vehicle, I saw two good-sized logs lying across our course.

Surely, I thought (and barely had time to think), he will avoid these. But he did not, and as we passed over them I was nearly thrown through the top of the ambulance. "This *is* a lively send-off," I said, rubbing my bruises with one hand, while I clung to the seat with the other. Presently I saw the cowboys scrambling up the bank as if to get out of our way; then the President on his fine gray stallion scrambling up the bank with his escort, and looking ominously in my direction, as we thundered by.

"Well," I said, "this is indeed a novel ride; for once in my life I have sidetracked the President of the United States! I am given the right of way over all." On we tore, along the smooth, hard road, and did not slacken our pace till, at the end of a mile or two, we began to mount the hill toward Fort Yellowstone. And not till we reached the fort did I learn that our mules had run away. They had been excited beyond control by the presidential cavalcade, and the driver, finding he could not hold them, had aimed only to keep them in the road, and we very soon had the road all to ourselves.

Fort Yellowstone is at Mammoth Hot Springs, where one gets his first view of the characteristic scenery of the Park, — huge, boiling springs with their columns of vapor, and the first characteristic odors which suggest the traditional infernal regions quite as much as the boiling and steaming water does. One also gets a taste of a much more rarefied air than he has been used to, and finds himself panting for breath on a very slight exertion. The Mammoth Hot Springs have built themselves up an enormous mound that stands there above the village on the side of the mountain, terraced

and scalloped and fluted, and suggesting some vitreous formation, or rare carving of enormous, many-colored precious stones. It looks quite unearthly, and, though the devil's frying pan, and ink pot, and the Stygian caves are not far off, the suggestion is of something celestial rather than of the nether regions, — a vision of jasper walls, and of amethyst battlements.

With Captain Chittenden I climbed to the top, stepping over the rills and creeks of steaming hot water, and looked at the marvelously clear, cerulean, but boiling, pools on the summit. The water seemed as unearthly in its beauty and purity as the gigantic sculpturing that held it.

The Stygian caves are still farther up the mountain, — little pockets in the rocks, or well-holes in the ground at your feet, filled with deadly carbon dioxide. We saw birds' feathers and quills in all of them. The birds hop into them, probably in quest of food or seeking shelter, and they never come out. We saw the body of a martin on the bank of one hole. Into one we sank a lighted torch, and it was extinguished as quickly as if we had dropped it into water. Each cave or niche is a death valley on a small scale. Near by we came upon a steaming pool, or lakelet, of an acre or more in extent. A pair of mallard ducks were swimming about in one end of it, — the cool end. When we approached, they swam slowly over into the warmer water. As they progressed, the water got hotter and hotter, and the ducks' discomfort was evident. Presently they stopped, and turned toward us, half appealingly, as I thought. They could go no farther; would we please come no nearer? As I took another step or two, up they rose and disappeared over the hill. Had

they gone to the extreme end of the pool, we could have had boiled mallard for dinner.

Another novel spectacle was at night, or near sundown, when the deer came down from the hills into the streets, and ate hay a few yards from the officers' quarters, as unconcernedly as so many domestic sheep. This they had been doing all winter, and they kept it up till May, at times a score or more of them profiting thus on the government's bounty. When the sundown gun was fired a couple of hundred yards away, they gave a nervous start, but kept on with their feeding. The antelope and elk and mountain sheep had not yet grown bold enough to accept Uncle Sam's charity in that way.

The President wanted all the freedom and solitude possible while in the Park, so all newspaper men and other strangers were excluded. Even the secret service men and his physician and private secretaries were left at Gardiner. He craved once more to be alone with nature; he was evidently hungry for the wild and the aboriginal, — a hunger that seems to come upon him regularly at least once a year, and drives him forth on his hunting trips for big game in the West.

We spent two weeks in the Park, and had fair weather, bright, crisp days, and clear, freezing nights. The first week we occupied three camps that had been prepared, or partly prepared, for us in the northeast corner of the Park, in the region drained by the Gardiner River, where there was but little snow, and which we reached on horseback.

The second week we visited the geyser region, which lies a thousand feet or more higher, and where the snow was still five or six feet deep. This part of

the journey was made in big sleighs, each drawn by two span of horses.

On the horseback excursion, which involved only about fifty miles of riding, we had a mule pack train, and Sibley tents and stoves, with quite a retinue of camp laborers, a lieutenant and an orderly or two, and a guide, Billy Hofer.

The first camp was in a wild, rocky, and picturesque gorge on the Yellowstone, about ten miles from the fort. A slight indisposition, the result of luxurious living, with no wood to chop or to saw, and no hills to climb, as at home, prevented me from joining the party till the third day. Then Captain Chittenden drove me eight miles in a buggy. About two miles from camp we came to a picket of two or three soldiers, where my big bay was in waiting for me. I mounted him confidently, and, guided by an orderly, took the narrow, winding trail toward camp. Except for an hour's riding the day before with Captain Chittenden, I had not been on a horse's back for nearly fifty years, and I had not spent as much as a day in the saddle during my youth. That first sense of a live, spirited, powerful animal beneath you, at whose mercy you are, — you, a pedestrian all your days, — with gullies and rocks and logs to cross, and deep chasms opening close beside you, is not a little disturbing. But my big bay did his part well, and I did not lose my head or my nerve, as we cautiously made our way along the narrow path on the side of the steep gorge, with a foaming torrent rushing along at its foot, nor yet when we forded the rocky and rapid Yellowstone. A misstep or a stumble on the part of my steed, and probably the first bubble of my confidence would have been shivered at

once; but this did not happen, and in due time we reached the group of tents that formed the President's camp.

The situation was delightful, — no snow, scattered pine trees, a secluded valley, rocky heights, and the clear, ample, trouty waters of the Yellowstone. The President was not in camp. In the morning he had stated his wish to go alone into the wilderness. Major Pitcher very naturally did not quite like the idea, and wished to send an orderly with him.

"No," said the President. "Put me up a lunch, and let me go alone. I will surely come back."

And back he surely came. It was about five o'clock when he came briskly down the path from the east to the camp. It came out that he had tramped about eighteen miles through a very rough country. The day before, he and the major had located a band of several hundred elk on a broad, treeless hillside, and his purpose was to find those elk, and creep up on them, and eat his lunch under their very noses. And this he did, spending an hour or more within fifty yards of them. He came back looking as fresh as when he started, and at night, sitting before the big camp fire, related his adventure, and talked with his usual emphasis and copiousness of many things. He told me of the birds he had seen or heard; among them he had heard one that was new to him. From his description I told him I thought it was Townsend's solitaire, a bird I much wanted to see and hear. I had heard the West India solitaire, — one of the most impressive songsters I ever heard, — and I wished to compare our Western form with it.

The next morning we set out for our second camp,



ten or a dozen miles away, and in reaching it passed over much of the ground the President had traversed the day before. As we came to a wild, rocky place above a deep chasm of the river, with a few scattered pine trees, the President said, "It was right here that I heard that strange bird song." We paused a moment. "And there it is now," he exclaimed.

Sure enough, there was the solitaire singing from the top of a small cedar, — a bright, animated, eloquent song, but without the richness and magic of the song of the tropical species. We hitched our horses, and followed the bird up as it flew from tree to tree. The President was as eager to see and hear it as I was. It seemed very shy, and we only caught glimpses of it. In form and color it much resembles its West India cousin, and suggests our catbird. It ceased to sing when we pursued it. It is a bird found only in the wilder and higher parts of the Rockies. My impression was that its song did not quite merit the encomiums that have been pronounced upon it.

At this point, I saw amid the rocks my first and only Rocky Mountain woodchucks, and, soon after we had resumed our journey, our first blue grouse, — a number of them like larger partridges. Occasionally we would come upon black-tailed deer, standing or lying down in the bushes, their large ears at attention being the first thing to catch the eye. They would often allow us to pass within a few rods of them without showing alarm. Elk horns were scattered all over this part of the Park, and we passed several old carcasses of dead elk that had probably died a natural death.

In a grassy bottom at the foot of a steep hill, while

the President and I were dismounted, and noting the pleasing picture which our pack train of fifteen or twenty mules made filing along the side of a steep grassy slope, — a picture which he has preserved in his late volume, "Out-Door Pastimes of an American Hunter," — our attention was attracted by plaintive, musical, bird-like chirps that rose from the grass about us. I was almost certain it was made by a bird; the President was of like opinion; and I kicked about in the tufts of grass, hoping to flush the bird. Now here, now there, arose this sharp, but bird-like note. Finally we found that it was made by a species of gopher, whose holes we soon discovered. What its specific name is I do not know, but it should be called the singing gopher.

Our destination this day was a camp on Cottonwood Creek, near "Hell Roaring Creek." As we made our way in the afternoon along a broad, open, grassy valley, I saw a horseman come galloping over the hill to our right, starting up a band of elk as he came; riding across the plain, he wheeled his horse, and, with the military salute, joined our party. He proved to be a government scout, called the "Duke of Hell Roaring," — an educated officer from the Austrian army who, for some unknown reason, had exiled himself here in this out-of-the-way part of the world. He was a man in his prime, of fine, military look and bearing. After conversing a few moments with the President and Major Pitcher, he rode rapidly away.

Our second camp, which we reached in mid-afternoon, was in the edge of the woods on the banks of a fine, large trout stream, where ice and snow still lingered in patches. I tried for trout in the head of a

large, partly open pool, but did not get a rise; too much ice in the stream, I concluded. Very soon my attention was attracted by a strange note, or call, in the spruce woods. The President had also noticed it, and, with me, wondered what made it. Was it bird or beast? Billy Hofer said he thought it was an owl, but it in no way suggested an owl, and the sun was shining brightly. It was a sound such as a boy might make by blowing in the neck of an empty bottle. Presently we heard it beyond us on the other side of the creek, which was pretty good proof that the creature had wings.

"Let's go run that bird down," said the President to me.

So off we started across a small, open, snow-streaked plain, toward the woods beyond it. We soon decided that the bird was on the top of one of a group of tall spruces. After much skipping about over logs and rocks, and much craning of our necks, we made him out on the peak of a spruce. I imitated his call, when he turned his head down toward us, but we could not make out what he was.

"Why did we not think to bring the glasses?" said the President.

"I will run and get them," I replied.

"No," said he, "you stay here and keep that bird treed, and I will fetch them."

So off he went like a boy, and was very soon back with the glasses. We quickly made out that it was indeed an owl, — the pigmy owl, as it turned out, — not much larger than a bluebird. I think the President was as pleased as if we had bagged some big game. He had never seen the bird before.

Throughout the trip I found his interest in bird life

very keen, and his eye and ear remarkably quick. He usually saw the bird or heard its note as quickly as I did, — and I had nothing else to think about, and had been teaching my eye and ear the trick of it for over fifty years. Of course, his training as a big-game hunter stood him in good stead, but back of that were his naturalist's instincts, and his genuine love of all forms of wild life.

I have been told that his ambition up to the time he went to Harvard had been to be a naturalist, but that there they seem to have convinced him that all the out-of-door worlds of natural history had been conquered, and that the only worlds remaining were in the laboratory, and to be won with the microscope and the scalpel. But Roosevelt was a man made for action in a wide field, and laboratory conquests could not satisfy him. His instincts as a naturalist, however, lie back of all his hunting expeditions, and, in a larger measure, I think, prompt them. Certain it is that his hunting records contain more live natural history than any similar records known to me, unless it be those of Charles St. John, the Scotch naturalist-sportsman.

The Canada jays, or camp-robbers, as they are often called, soon found out our camp that afternoon, and no sooner had the cook begun to throw out peelings and scraps and crusts than the jays began to carry them off, not to eat, as I observed, but to hide them in the thicker branches of the spruce trees. How tame they were, coming within three or four yards of one! Why this species of jay should everywhere be so familiar, and all other kinds so wild, is a puzzle.

In the morning, as we rode down the valley toward

our next camping-place, at Tower Falls, a band of elk containing a hundred or more started along the side of the hill a few hundred yards away. I was some distance behind the rest of the party, as usual, when I saw the President wheel his horse off to the left, and, beckoning to me to follow, start at a tearing pace on the trail of the fleeing elk. He afterwards told me that he wanted me to get a good view of those elk at close range, and he was afraid that if he sent the major or Hofer to lead me, I would not get it. I hurried along as fast as I could, which was not fast; the way was rough, — logs, rocks, spring runs, and a tenderfoot rider.

Now and then the President, looking back and seeing what slow progress I was making, would beckon to me impatiently, and I could fancy him saying, "If I had a rope around him, he would come faster than that!" Once or twice I lost sight of both him and the elk; the altitude was great, and the horse was laboring like a steam-engine on an upgrade. Still I urged him on. Presently, as I broke over a hill, I saw the President pressing the elk up the opposite slope. At the brow of the hill he stopped, and I soon joined him. There on the top, not fifty yards away, stood the elk in a mass, their heads toward us and their tongues hanging out. They could run no farther. The President laughed like a boy. The spectacle meant much more to him than it did to me. I had never seen a wild elk till on this trip, but they had been among the notable game that he had hunted. He had traveled hundreds of miles, and undergone great hardships, to get within rifle range of these creatures. Now here stood scores of them, with lolling tongues, begging for mercy.

After gazing at them to our hearts' content, we turned away to look up our companions, who were nowhere within sight. We finally spied them a mile or more away, and, joining them, all made our way to an elevated plateau that commanded an open landscape three or four miles across. It was high noon, and the sun shone clear and warm. From this lookout we saw herds upon herds of elk scattered over the slopes and gentle valleys in front of us. Some were grazing, some were standing or lying upon the ground, or upon the patches of snow. Through our glasses we counted the separate bands, and then the numbers of some of the bands or groups, and estimated that three thousand elk were in full view in the landscape around us. It was a notable spectacle. Afterward, in Montana, I attended a council of Indian chiefs at one of the Indian agencies, and told them, through their interpreter, that I had been with the Great Chief in the Park, and of the game we had seen. When I told them of these three thousand elk all in view at once, they grunted loudly, whether with satisfaction or with incredulity, I could not tell.

In the midst of this great game amphitheatre we dismounted and enjoyed the prospect. And the President did an unusual thing, he loafed for nearly an hour, — stretched himself out in the sunshine upon a flat rock, as did the rest of us, and, I hope, got a few winks of sleep. I am sure I did. Little, slender, striped chipmunks, about half the size of ours, were scurrying about; but I recall no other wild thing save the elk.

From here we rode down the valley to our third camp, at Tower Falls, stopping on the way to eat our

luncheon on a washed boulder beside a creek. On this ride I saw my first and only badger; he stuck his striped head out of his hole in the ground only a few yards away from us as we passed.

Our camp at Tower Falls was amid the spruces above a cañon of the Yellowstone, five or six hundred feet deep. It was a beautiful and impressive situation, — shelter, snugness, even cosiness, looking over the brink of the awful and the terrifying. With a run and a jump I think one might have landed in the river at the bottom of the great abyss, and in doing so might have scaled one of those natural obelisks or needles of rock that stand up out of the depths two or three hundred feet high. Nature shows you what an enormous furrow her plough can open through the strata when moving horizontally, at the same time that she shows you what delicate and graceful columns her slower and gentler aerial forces can carve out of the piled strata. At the Falls there were two or three of these columns, like the picket-pins of the elder gods.

Across the cañon in front of our camp, upon a grassy plateau which was faced by a wall of trap rock, apparently thirty or forty feet high, a band of mountain sheep soon attracted our attention. They were within long rifle range, but were not at all disturbed by our presence, nor had they been disturbed by the road-builders who, under Captain Chittenden, were constructing a government road along the brink of the cañon. We speculated as to whether or not the sheep could get down the almost perpendicular face of the chasm to the river to drink. It seemed to me impossible. Would they try it while we were there to see? We all hoped so; and sure enough, late in the after-



noon the word came to our tents that the sheep were coming down. The President, with coat off and a towel around his neck, was shaving. One side of his face was half shaved, and the other side lathered. Hofer and I started for a point on the brink of the cañon where we could have a better view.

"I must see that," said the President. "The shaving can wait, and the sheep won't."

So on he came, accoutred as he was, — coatless, hatless, but not latherless, nor towelless. Like the rest of us, his only thought was to see those sheep. With glasses in hand, we watched them descend those perilous heights, leaping from point to point, finding a foothold where none appeared to our eyes, loosening fragments of the crumbling rocks as they came, now poised upon some narrow shelf and preparing for the next leap, zig-zagging or plunging straight down till the bottom was reached, and not one accident or misstep amid all that insecure footing. I think the President was the most pleased of us all; he laughed with the delight of it, and quite forgot his need of a hat and coat till I sent for them.

In the night we heard the sheep going back; we could tell by the noise of the falling stones. In the morning I confidently expected to see some of them lying dead at the foot of the cliffs, but there they all were at the top once more, apparently safe and sound. They do, however, occasionally meet with accidents in their perilous climbing, and their dead bodies have been found at the foot of the rocks. Doubtless some point of rock to which they had trusted gave way, and crushed them in the descent, or fell upon those in the lead.

The next day, while the rest of us went fishing for trout in the Yellowstone, three or four miles above camp, over the roughest trail that we had yet traversed on horseback, the President, who never fishes unless put to it for meat, went off alone again with his lunch in his pocket, to stalk those sheep as he had stalked the elk, and to feel the old sportsman's thrill without the use of firearms. To do this involved a tramp of eight or ten miles down the river to a bridge and up the opposite bank. This he did, and ate his lunch near the sheep, and was back in camp before we were.

We took some large cut-throat trout, as they are called, from the yellow mark across their throats, and I saw at short range a black-tailed deer bounding along in that curious, stiff-legged, mechanical, yet springy manner, apparently all four legs in the air at once, and all four feet reaching the ground at once, affording a very singular spectacle.

We spent two nights in our Tower Falls camp, and on the morning of the third day set out on our return to Fort Yellowstone, pausing at Yancey's on our way, and exchanging greetings with the old frontiersman, who died a few weeks later.

While in camp we always had a big fire at night in the open near the tents, and around this we sat upon logs or camp-stools, and listened to the President's talk. What a stream of it he poured forth! and what a varied and picturesque stream! — anecdote, history, science, politics, adventure, literature; bits of his experience as a ranchman, hunter, Rough Rider, legislator, Civil Service commissioner, police commissioner, governor, president, — the frankest confessions, the most telling criticisms, happy characteriza-

tions of prominent political leaders, or foreign rulers, or members of his own Cabinet; always surprising by his candor, astonishing by his memory, and diverting by his humor. His reading has been very wide, and he has that rare type of memory which retains details as well as mass and generalities. One night something started him off on ancient history, and one would have thought he was just fresh from his college course in history, the dates and names and events came so readily. Another time he discussed palæontology, and rapidly gave the outlines of the science, and the main facts, as if he had been reading up on the subject that very day. He sees things as wholes, and hence the relation of the parts comes easy to him.

At dinner, at the White House, the night before we started on the expedition, I heard him talking with a guest, — an officer of the British army, who was just back from India. And the extent and variety of his information about India and Indian history and the relations of the British government to it were extraordinary. It put the British major on his mettle to keep pace with him.

One night in camp he told us the story of one of his Rough Riders who had just written him from some place in Arizona. The Rough Riders, wherever they are now, look to him in time of trouble. This one had come to grief in Arizona. He was in jail. So he wrote the President, and his letter ran something like this: —

“DEAR COLONEL, — I am in trouble. I shot a lady in the eye, but I did not intend to hit the lady; I was shooting at my wife.”

And the presidential laughter rang out over the treetops. To another Rough Rider, who was in jail,

accused of horse stealing, he had loaned two hundred dollars to pay counsel on his trial, and, to his surprise, in due time the money came back. The Ex-Rough wrote that his trial never came off. "*We elected our district attorney;*" and the laughter again sounded, and drowned the noise of the brook near by.

On another occasion we asked the President if he was ever molested by any of the "bad men" of the frontier, with whom he had often come in contact. "Only once," he said. The cowboys had always treated him with the utmost courtesy, both on the round-up and in camp; "and the few real desperadoes I have seen were also perfectly polite." Once only was he maliciously shot at, and then not by a cowboy nor a *bona fide* "bad man," but by a "broad-hatted ruffian of a cheap and commonplace type." He had been compelled to pass the night at a little frontier hotel where the bar-room occupied the whole lower floor, and was, in consequence, the only place where the guests of the hotel, whether drunk or sober, could sit. As he entered the room, he saw that every man there was being terrorized by a half-drunken ruffian who stood in the middle of the floor with a revolver in each hand, compelling different ones to treat.

"I went and sat down behind the stove," said the President, "as far from him as I could get; and hoped to escape his notice. The fact that I wore glasses, together with my evident desire to avoid a fight, apparently gave him the impression that I could be imposed upon with impunity. He very soon approached me, flourishing his two guns, and ordered me to treat. I made no reply for some moments, when the fellow became so threatening that I saw something

had to be done. The crowd, mostly sheep-herders and small grangers, sat or stood back against the wall, afraid to move. I was unarmed, and thought rapidly. Saying, 'Well, if I must, I must,' I got up as if to walk around him to the bar, then, as I got opposite him, I wheeled and fetched him as heavy a blow on the chin-point as I could strike. He went down like a steer before the axe, firing both guns into the ceiling as he went. I jumped on him, and, with my knees on his chest, disarmed him in a hurry. The crowd was then ready enough to help me, and we hog-tied him and put him in an outhouse." The President alludes to this incident in his "Ranch Life," but does not give the details. It brings out his mettle very distinctly.

He told us in an amused way of the attempts of his political opponents at Albany, during his early career as a member of the Assembly, to besmirch his character. His outspoken criticisms and denunciations had become intolerable to them, so they laid a trap for him, but he was not caught. His innate rectitude and instinct for the right course saved him, as it has saved him many times since. I do not think that in any emergency he has to debate with himself long as to the right course to be pursued; he divines it by a kind of infallible instinct. His motives are so simple and direct that he finds a straight and easy course where another man, whose eye is less single, would flounder and hesitate.

The President unites in himself powers and qualities that rarely go together. Thus, he has both physical and moral courage in a degree rare in history. He can stand calm and unflinching in the path of a charging grizzly, and he can confront with equal coolness and

determination the predaceous corporations and money powers of the country.

He unites the qualities of the man of action with those of the scholar and writer, — another very rare combination. He unites the instincts and accomplishments of the best breeding and culture with the broadest democratic sympathies and affiliations. He is as happy with a frontiersman like Seth Bullock as with a fellow Harvard man, and Seth Bullock is happy, too.

He unites great austerity with great good-nature. He unites great sensibility with great force and will power. He loves solitude, and he loves to be in the thick of the fight. His love of nature is equaled only by his love of the ways and marts of men.

He is doubtless the most vital man on the continent, if not on the planet, to-day. He is many-sided, and every side throbs with his tremendous life and energy; the pressure is equal all around. His interests are as keen in natural history as in economics, in literature as in statecraft, in the young poet as in the old soldier, in preserving peace as in preparing for war. And he can turn all his great power into the new channel on the instant. His interest in the whole of life, and in the whole life of the nation, never flags for a moment. His activity is tireless. All the relaxation he needs or craves is a change of work. He is like the farmer's fields, that only need a rotation of crops. I once heard him say that all he cared about being President was just "the big work."

During this tour through the West, lasting over two months, he made nearly three hundred speeches; and yet on his return Mrs. Roosevelt told me he looked as fresh and unworn as when he left home.





**SUNRISE IN YELLOWSTONE PARK.**

From stereograph, copyright 1904, by Underwood & Underwood, New York.





We went up into the big geyser region with the big sleighs, each drawn by four horses. A big snow-bank had to be shoveled through for us before we got to the Golden Gate, two miles above Mammoth Hot Springs. Beyond that we were at an altitude of about eight thousand feet, on a fairly level course that led now through woods, and now through open country, with the snow of a uniform depth of four or five feet, except as we neared the "formations," where the subterranean warmth kept the ground bare. The roads had been broken and the snow packed for us by teams from the fort, otherwise the journey would have been impossible.

The President always rode beside the driver. From his youth, he said, this seat had always been the most desirable one to him. When the sleigh would strike the bare ground, and begin to drag heavily, he would bound out nimbly and take to his heels, and then all three of us — Major Pitcher, Mr. Childs, and myself — would follow suit, sometimes reluctantly on my part. Walking at that altitude is no fun, especially if you try to keep pace with such a walker as the President is. But he could not sit at his ease and let those horses drag him in a sleigh over bare ground. When snow was reached, we would again quickly resume our seats.

As one nears the geyser region, he gets the impression from the columns of steam going up here and there in the distance — now from behind a piece of woods, now from out a hidden valley — that he is approaching a manufacturing centre, or a railroad terminus. And when he begins to hear the hoarse snoring of "Roaring Mountain," the illusion is still more complete. At Norris's there is a big vent where the steam comes tearing out of a recent hole in the ground with terrific

force. Huge mounds of ice had formed from the congealed vapor all around it, some of them very striking.

The novelty of the geyser region soon wears off. Steam and hot water are steam and hot water the world over, and the exhibition of them here did not differ, except in volume, from what one sees by his own fireside. The "Growler" is only a boiling tea-kettle on a large scale, and "Old Faithful" is as if the lid were to fly off, and the whole contents of the kettle should be thrown high into the air. To be sure, boiling lakes and steaming rivers are not common, but the new features seemed, somehow, out of place, and as if nature had made a mistake. One disliked to see so much good steam and hot water going to waste; whole towns might be warmed by them, and big wheels made to go round. I wondered that they had not piped them into the big hotels which they opened for us, and which were warmed by wood fires.

At Norris's the big room that the President and I occupied was on the ground floor, and was heated by a huge box stove. As we entered it to go to bed, the President said, "Oom John, don't you think it is too hot here?"

"I certainly do," I replied.

"Shall I open the window?"

"That will just suit me." And he threw the sash, which came down to the floor, all the way up, making an opening like a doorway. The night was cold, but neither of us suffered from the abundance of fresh air. The caretaker of the building was a big Swede called Andy. In the morning Andy said that beat him: "There was the President of the United States sleeping in that room, with the window open to the

floor, and not so much as one soldier outside on guard."

The President had counted much on seeing the bears that in summer board at the Fountain Hotel, but they were not yet out of their dens. We saw the track of only one, and he was not making for the hotel. At all the formations where the geysers are, the ground was bare over a large area. I even saw a wild flower — an early buttercup, not an inch high — in bloom. This seems to be the earliest wild flower in the Rockies. It is the only fragrant buttercup I know.

As we were riding along in our big sleigh toward the Fountain Hotel, the President suddenly jumped out, and, with his soft hat as a shield to his hand, captured a mouse that was running along over the ground near us. He wanted it for Dr. Merriam, on the chance that it might be a new species. While we all went fishing in the afternoon, the President skinned his mouse, and prepared the pelt to be sent to Washington. It was done as neatly as a professed taxidermist would have done it. This was the only game the President killed in the Park. In relating the incident to a reporter while I was in Spokane, the thought occurred to me, Suppose he changes that *u* to an *o*, and makes the President capture a moose, what a predicament I shall be in! Is it anything more than ordinary newspaper enterprise to turn a mouse into a moose? But, luckily for me, no such metamorphosis happened to that little mouse. It turned out not to be a new species, as it should have been, but a species new to the Park.

I caught trout that afternoon, on the edge of steaming pools in the Madison River, that seemed to my

hand almost blood-warm. I suppose they found better feeding where the water was warm. On the table they did not compare with our Eastern brook trout.

I was pleased to be told at one of the hotels that they had kalsomined some of the rooms with material from one of the devil's paint-pots. It imparted a soft, delicate, pinkish tint, not at all suggestive of things satanic.

One afternoon at Norris's, the President and I took a walk to observe the birds. In the grove about the barns there was a great number, the most attractive to me being the mountain bluebird. These birds we saw in all parts of the Park, and at Norris's there was an unusual number of them. How blue they were, — breast and all. In voice and manner they were almost identical with our bluebird. The Western purple finch was abundant here also, and juncos, and several kinds of sparrows, with an occasional Western robin. A pair of wild geese were feeding in the low, marshy ground not over one hundred yards from us, but when we tried to approach nearer they took wing. A few geese and ducks seem to winter in the Park.

The second morning at Norris's, one of our teamsters, George Marvin, suddenly dropped dead from some heart affection, just as he had finished caring for his team. It was a great shock to us all. I never saw a better man with a team than he was. I had ridden on the seat beside him all the day previous. On one of the "formations" our teams had got mired in the soft, putty-like mud, and at one time it looked as if they could never extricate themselves, and I doubt if they could have, had it not been for the skill with which Marvin managed them. We started for the

Grand Cañon up the Yellowstone that morning, and, in order to give myself a walk over the crisp snow in the clear, frosty air, I set out a little while in advance of the teams. As I did so, I saw the President, accompanied by one of the teamsters, walking hurriedly toward the barn to pay his last respects to the body of Marvin. After we had returned to Mammoth Hot Springs, he made inquiries for the young woman to whom he had been told that Marvin was engaged to be married. He looked her up, and sat a long time with her in her home, offering his sympathy, and speaking words of consolation. The act shows the depth and breadth of his humanity.

At the Cañon Hotel the snow was very deep, and had become so soft from the warmth of the earth beneath, as well as from the sun above, that we could only reach the brink of the Cañon on skis. The President and Major Pitcher had used skis before, but I had not, and, starting out without the customary pole, I soon came to grief. The snow gave way beneath me, and I was soon in an awkward predicament. The more I struggled, the lower my head and shoulders went, till only my heels, strapped to those long timbers, protruded above the snow. To reverse my position was impossible till some one came, and reached me the end of a pole, and pulled me upright. But I very soon got the hang of the things, and the President and I quickly left the superintendent behind. I think I could have passed the President, but my manners forbade. He was heavier than I was, and broke in more. When one of his feet would go down half a yard or more, I noted with admiration the skilled diplomacy he displayed in extricating it. The tend-

ency of my skis was all the time to diverge, and each to go off at an acute angle to my main course, and I had constantly to be on the alert to check this tendency.

Paths had been shoveled for us along the brink of the Cañon, so that we got the usual views from the different points. The Cañon was nearly free from snow, and was a grand spectacle, by far the grandest to be seen in the Park. The President told us that once, when pressed for meat, while returning through here from one of his hunting trips, he had made his way down to the river that we saw rushing along beneath us, and had caught some trout for dinner. Necessity alone could induce him to fish.

Across the head of the Falls there was a bridge of snow and ice, upon which we were told that the coyotes passed. As the season progressed, there would come a day when the bridge would not be safe. It would be interesting to know if the coyotes knew when this time arrived.

The only live thing we saw in the Cañon was an osprey perched upon a rock opposite us.

Near the falls of the Yellowstone, as at other places we had visited, a squad of soldiers had their winter quarters. The President always called on them, looked over the books they had to read, examined their house-keeping arrangements, and conversed freely with them.

In front of the hotel were some low hills separated by gentle valleys. At the President's suggestion, he and I raced on our skis down those inclines. We had only to stand up straight, and let gravity do the rest. As we were going swiftly down the side of one of the



hills, I saw out of the corner of my eye the President taking a header into the snow. The snow had given way beneath him, and nothing could save him from taking the plunge. I don't know whether I called out, or only thought, something about the downfall of the administration. At any rate, the administration was down, and pretty well buried, but it was quickly on its feet again, shaking off the snow with a boy's laughter. I kept straight on, and very soon the laugh was on me, for the treacherous snow sank beneath me, and I took a header, too.

"Who is laughing now, Oom John?" called out the President.

The spirit of the boy was in the air that day about the Cañon of the Yellowstone, and the biggest boy of us all was President Roosevelt.

The snow was getting so soft in the middle of the day that our return to the Mammoth Hot Springs could no longer be delayed. Accordingly, we were up in the morning, and ready to start on the home journey, a distance of twenty miles, by four o'clock. The snow bore up the horses well till mid-forenoon, when it began to give way beneath them. But by very careful management we pulled through without serious delay, and were back again at the house of Major Pitcher in time for luncheon, being the only outsiders who had ever made the tour of the Park so early in the season.

A few days later I bade good-by to the President, who went on his way to California, while I made a loop of travel to Spokane, and around through Idaho and Montana, and had glimpses of the great, optimistic, sunshiny West that I shall not soon forget.

## A TRAMP IN THE CATSKILLS

IN 1868 a party of three of us set out for a brief trouting excursion to a body of water called Thomas's Lake, situated in the southern Catskills. On this excursion, more particularly than on any other I have ever undertaken, I was taught how poor an Indian I should make, and what a ridiculous figure a party of men may cut in the woods when the way is uncertain and the mountains high.

We left our team at a farmhouse near the head of the Mill Brook, one June afternoon, and with knapsacks on our shoulders struck into the woods at the base of the mountain, hoping to cross the range that intervened between us and the lake by sunset. We engaged a good-natured but rather indolent young man, who happened to be stopping at the house, and who had carried a knapsack in the Union armies, to pilot us a couple of miles into the woods so as to guard against any mistakes at the outset. It seemed the easiest thing in the world to find the lake. The lay of the land was so simple, according to accounts, that I felt sure I could go to it in the dark. "Go up this little brook to its source on the side of the mountain," they said. "The valley that contains the lake heads directly on the other side." What could be easier! But on a little further inquiry, they said we should "bear well to the left" when we reached the top of the mountain. This opened the doors again; "bearing well to the left" was an uncertain performance in strange

woods. We might bear so well to the left that it would bring us ill. But why bear to the left at all, if the lake was directly opposite? Well, not quite opposite; a little to the left. There were two or three other valleys that headed in near there. We could easily find the right one. But to make assurance doubly sure, we engaged a guide, as stated, to give us a good start, and go with us beyond the bearing-to-the-left point. He had been to the lake the winter before and knew the way. Our course, the first half hour, was along an obscure wood-road which had been used for drawing ash logs off the mountain in winter. There was some hemlock, but more maple and birch. The woods were dense and free from underbrush, the ascent gradual. Most of the way we kept the voice of the creek in our ear on the right. I approached it once, and found it swarming with trout. The water was as cold as one ever need wish. After a while the ascent grew steeper, the creek became a mere rill that issued from beneath loose, moss-covered rocks and stones, and with much labor and puffing we drew ourselves up the rugged declivity. Every mountain has its steepest point, which is usually near the summit, in keeping, I suppose, with the providence that makes the darkest hour just before day. It is steep, steeper, steepest, till you emerge on the smooth level or gently rounded space at the top, which the old ice-gods polished off so long ago.

We found this mountain had a hollow in its back where the ground was soft and swampy. Some gigantic ferns, which we passed through, came nearly to our shoulders. We passed also several patches of swamp honeysuckles, red with blossoms.

Our guide at length paused on a big rock where the land began to dip down the other way, and concluded that he had gone far enough, and that we would now have no difficulty in finding the lake. "It must lie right down there," he said, pointing with his hand. But it was plain that he was not quite sure in his own mind. He had several times wavered in his course, and had shown considerable embarrassment when bearing to the left across the summit. Still we thought little of it. We were full of confidence, and, bidding him adieu, plunged down the mountain-side, following a spring run that we had no doubt led to the lake.

In these woods, which had a southeastern exposure, I first began to notice the wood thrush. In coming up the other side I had not seen a feather of any kind, or heard a note. Now the golden *trillide-de* of the wood thrush sounded through the silent woods. While looking for a fish-pole about half way down the mountain, I saw a thrush's nest in a little sapling about ten feet from the ground.

After continuing our descent till our only guide, the spring run, became quite a trout brook, and its tiny murmur a loud brawl, we began to peer anxiously through the trees for a glimpse of the lake, or for some conformation of the land that would indicate its proximity. An object which we vaguely discerned in looking under the near trees and over the more distant ones proved, on further inspection, to be a patch of ploughed ground. Presently we made out a burnt fallow near it. This was a wet blanket to our enthusiasm. No lake, no sport, no trout for supper that night. The rather indolent young man had either

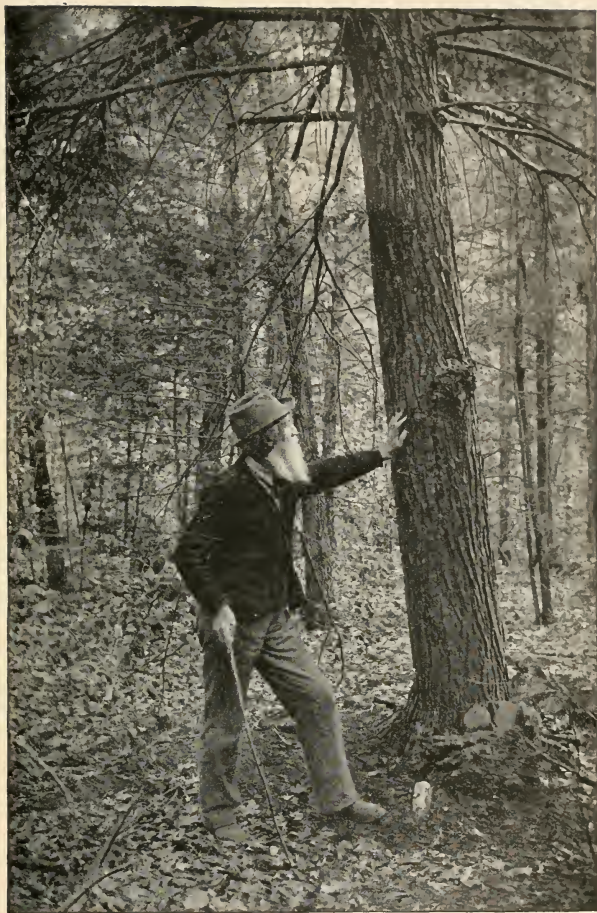
played us a trick, or, as seemed more likely, had missed the way. We were particularly anxious to be at the lake between sundown and dark, as at that time the trout jump most freely.

Pushing on, we soon emerged into a stumpy field, at the head of a steep valley, which swept around toward the west. About two hundred rods below us was a rude log house, with smoke issuing from the chimney. A boy came out and moved toward the spring with a pail in his hand. We shouted to him, when he turned and ran back into the house without pausing to reply. In a moment, the whole family hastily rushed into the yard, and turned their faces toward us. If we had come down their chimney, they could not have seemed more astonished. Not making out what they said, I went down to the house, and learned to my chagrin that we were still on the Mill Brook side, having crossed only a spur of the mountain. We had not borne sufficiently to the left, so that the main range, which, at the point of crossing, suddenly breaks off to the southeast, still intervened between us and the lake. We were about five miles, as the water runs, from the point of starting, and over two from the lake. We must go directly back to the top of the range where the guide had left us, and then, by keeping well to the left, we would soon come to a line of marked trees, which would lead us to the lake. So, turning upon our trail, we doggedly began the work of undoing what we had just done, — in all cases a disagreeable task, in this case a very laborious one also. It was after sunset when we turned back, and before we had got half way up the mountain it began to be quite dark. We were often obliged to rest our packs against trees and take

breath, which made our progress slow. Finally a halt was called, beside an immense flat rock which had paused in its slide down the mountain, and we prepared to encamp for the night. A fire was built, the rock cleared off, a small ration of bread served out, our accoutrements hung up out of the way of the hedgehogs that were supposed to infest the locality and then we disposed ourselves for sleep. If the owls or porcupines (and I think I heard one of the latter in the middle of the night) reconnoitred our camp, they saw a buffalo robe spread upon a rock, with three old felt hats arranged on one side, and three pairs of sorry-looking cowhide boots protruding from the other.

When we lay down, there was apparently not a mosquito in the woods; but the "no-see-ems," as Thoreau's Indian aptly named the midges, soon found us out, and after the fire had gone down annoyed us much. My hands and wrists suddenly began to smart and itch in a most unaccountable manner. My first thought was that they had been poisoned in some way. Then the smarting extended to my neck and face, even to my scalp, when I began to suspect what was the matter. So, wrapping myself up more thoroughly, and stowing my hands away as best I could, I tried to sleep, being some time behind my companions, who appeared not to mind the "no-see-ems." I was further annoyed by some little irregularity on my side of the couch. The chambermaid had not beaten it up well. One huge lump refused to be mollified, and each attempt to adapt it to some natural hollow in my own body brought only a moment's relief. But at last I got the better of this also and slept. Late in the night I woke up, just in time to hear a golden-crowned thrush





IN THE WOODS





sing in a tree near by. It sang as loud and cheerily as at midday, and I thought myself, after all, quite in luck. Birds occasionally sing at night, just as the cock crows. I have heard the hairbird, and the note of the kingbird; and the ruffed grouse frequently drums at night.

At the first faint signs of day a wood thrush sang, a few rods below us. Then after a little delay, as the gray light began to grow around, thrushes broke out in full song in all parts of the woods. I thought I had never before heard them sing so sweetly. Such a leisurely, golden chant! — it consoled us for all we had undergone. It was the first thing in order, — the worms were safe till after this morning chorus. I judged that the birds roosted but a few feet from the ground. In fact, a bird in all cases roosts where it builds, and the wood thrush occupies, as it were, the first story of the woods.

There is something singular about the distribution of the wood thrushes. At an earlier stage of my observations I should have been much surprised at finding them in these woods. Indeed, I had stated in print on two occasions that the wood thrush was not found in the higher lands of the Catskills, but that the hermit thrush and the veery, or Wilson's thrush, were common. It turns out that this statement is only half true. The wood thrush is found also, but is much more rare and secluded in its habits than either of the others, being seen only during the breeding season on remote mountains, and then only on their eastern and southern slopes. I have never yet in this region found the bird spending the season in the near and familiar woods, which is directly contrary to observations I have made in other parts of the State. So different are the habits of birds in different localities.

As soon as it was fairly light we were up and ready to resume our march. A small bit of bread-and-butter and a swallow or two of whiskey was all we had for breakfast that morning. Our supply of each was very limited, and we were anxious to save a little of both, to relieve the diet of trout to which we looked forward.

At an early hour we reached the rock where we had parted with the guide, and looked around us into the dense, trackless woods with many misgivings. To strike out now on our own hook, where the way was so blind and after the experience we had just had, was a step not to be carelessly taken. The tops of these mountains are so broad, and a short distance in the woods seems so far, that one is by no means master of the situation after reaching the summit. And then there are so many spurs and offshoots and changes of direction, added to the impossibility of making any generalization by the aid of the eye, that before one is aware of it he is very wide of his mark.

I remembered now that a young farmer of my acquaintance had told me how he had made a long day's march through the heart of this region, without path or guide of any kind, and had hit his mark squarely. He had been barkpeeling in Callikoon, — a famous country for bark, — and, having got enough of it, he desired to reach his home on Dry Brook without making the usual circuitous journey between the two places. To do this necessitated a march of ten or twelve miles across several ranges of mountains and through an unbroken forest, — a hazardous undertaking in which no one would join him. Even the old hunters who were familiar with the ground dissuaded him and predicted the failure of his enterprise. But

having made up his mind, he possessed himself thoroughly of the topography of the country from the aforesaid hunters, shouldered his axe, and set out, holding a straight course through the woods, and turning aside for neither swamps, streams, nor mountains. When he paused to rest he would mark some object ahead of him with his eye, in order that on getting up again he might not deviate from his course. His directors had told him of a hunter's cabin about midway on his route, which if he struck he might be sure he was right. About noon this cabin was reached, and at sunset he emerged at the head of Dry Brook.

After looking in vain for the line of marked trees, we moved off to the left in a doubtful, hesitating manner, keeping on the highest ground and blazing the trees as we went. We were afraid to go down hill, lest we should descend too soon; our vantage-ground was high ground. A thick fog coming on, we were more bewildered than ever. Still we pressed forward, climbing up ledges and wading through ferns for about two hours, when we paused by a spring that issued from beneath an immense wall of rock that belted the highest part of the mountain. There was quite a broad plateau here, and the birch wood was very dense, and the trees of unusual size.

After resting and exchanging opinions, we all concluded that it was best not to continue our search incumbered as we were; but we were not willing to abandon it altogether, and I proposed to my companions to leave them beside the spring with our traps, while I made one thorough and final effort to find the lake. If I succeeded and desired them to come forward, I was to fire my gun three times; if I failed and

wished to return, I would fire it twice, they of course responding.

So, filling my canteen from the spring, I set out again, taking the spring run for my guide. Before I had followed it two hundred yards it sank into the ground at my feet. I had half a mind to be superstitious and to believe that we were under a spell, since our guides played us such tricks. However, I determined to put the matter to a further test, and struck out boldly to the left. This seemed to be the keyword, — to the left, to the left. The fog had now lifted, so that I could form a better idea of the lay of the land. Twice I looked down the steep sides of the mountain, sorely tempted to risk a plunge. Still I hesitated and kept along on the brink. As I stood on a rock deliberating, I heard a crackling of the brush, like the tread of some large game, on a plateau below me. Suspecting the truth of the case, I moved stealthily down, and found a herd of young cattle leisurely browsing. We had several times crossed their trail, and had seen that morning a level, grassy place on the top of the mountain, where they had passed the night. Instead of being frightened, as I had expected, they seemed greatly delighted, and gathered around me as if to inquire the tidings from the outer world, — perhaps the quotations of the cattle market. They came up to me, and eagerly licked my hand, clothes, and gun. Salt was what they were after, and they were ready to swallow anything that contained the smallest percentage of it. They were mostly yearlings and as sleek as moles. They had a very gamy look. We were afterwards told that, in the spring, the farmers round about turn into these woods their young cattle, which do not come out

again till fall. They are then in good condition, — not fat, like grass-fed cattle, but trim and supple, like deer. Once a month the owner hunts them up and salts them. They have their beats, and seldom wander beyond well-defined limits. It was interesting to see them feed. They browsed on the low limbs and bushes, and on the various plants, munching at everything without any apparent discrimination.

They attempted to follow me, but I escaped them by clambering down some steep rocks. I now found myself gradually edging down the side of the mountain, keeping around it in a spiral manner, and scanning the woods and the shape of the ground for some encouraging hint or sign. Finally the woods became more open, and the descent less rapid. The trees were remarkably straight and uniform in size. Black birches, the first I had seen, were very numerous. I felt encouraged. Listening attentively, I caught, from a breeze just lifting the drooping leaves, a sound that I willingly believed was made by a bullfrog. On this hint, I tore down through the woods at my highest speed. Then I paused and listened again. This time there was no mistaking it; it was the sound of frogs. Much elated, I rushed on. By and by I could hear them as I ran. *Pthrung, pthrung*, croaked the old ones; *pug, pug*, shrilly joined in the smaller fry.

Then I caught, through the lower trees, a gleam of blue, which I first thought was distant sky. A second look and I knew it to be water, and in a moment more I stepped from the woods and stood upon the shore of the lake. I exulted silently. There it was at last, sparkling in the morning sun, and as beautiful as a dream. It was so good to come upon such open

space and such bright hues, after wandering in the dim, dense woods! The eye is as delighted as an escaped bird, and darts gleefully from point to point.

The lake was a long oval, scarcely more than a mile in circumference, with evenly wooded shores, which rose gradually on all sides. After contemplating the scene for a moment, I stepped back into the woods, and, loading my gun as heavily as I dared, discharged it three times. The reports seemed to fill all the mountains with sound. The frogs quickly hushed, and I listened for the response. But no response came. Then I tried again and again, but without evoking an answer. One of my companions, however, who had climbed to the top of the high rocks in the rear of the spring, thought he heard faintly one report. It seemed an immense distance below him, and far around under the mountain. I knew I had come a long way, and hardly expected to be able to communicate with my companions in the manner agreed upon. I therefore started back, choosing my course without any reference to the circuitous route by which I had come, and loading heavily and firing at intervals. I must have aroused many long-dormant echoes from a Rip Van Winkle sleep. As my powder got low, I fired and halloed alternately, till I came near splitting both my throat and gun. Finally, after I had begun to have a very ugly feeling of alarm and disappointment, and to cast about vaguely for some course to pursue in the emergency that seemed near at hand, — namely, the loss of my companions now I had found the lake, — a favoring breeze brought me the last echo of a response. I rejoined with spirit, and hastened with all speed in the direction whence the sound had come, but, after



repeated trials, failed to elicit another answering sound. This filled me with apprehension again. I feared that my friends had been misled by the reverberations, and I pictured them to myself hastening in the opposite direction. Paying little attention to my course, but paying dearly for my carelessness afterward, I rushed forward to undeceive them. But they had not been deceived, and in a few moments an answering shout revealed them near at hand. I heard their tramp, the bushes parted, and we three met again.

In answer to their eager inquiries, I assured them that I had seen the lake, that it was at the foot of the mountain, and that we could not miss it if we kept straight down from where we then were.

My clothes were soaked with perspiration, but I shouldered my knapsack with alacrity, and we began the descent. I noticed that the woods were much thicker, and had quite a different look from those I had passed through, but thought nothing of it, as I expected to strike the lake near its head, whereas I had before come out at its foot. We had not gone far when we crossed a line of marked trees, which my companions were disposed to follow. It intersected our course nearly at right angles, and kept along and up the side of the mountain. My impression was that it led up from the lake, and that by keeping our own course we should reach the lake sooner than if we followed this line.

About half way down the mountain, we could see through the interstices the opposite slope. I encouraged my comrades by telling them that the lake was between us and that, and not more than half a mile distant. We soon reached the bottom, where we found

a small stream and quite an extensive alder swamp, evidently the ancient bed of a lake. I explained to my half-vexed and half-incredulous companions that we were probably above the lake, and that this stream must lead to it. "Follow it," they said; "we will wait here till we hear from you."

So I went on, more than ever disposed to believe that we were under a spell, and that the lake had slipped from my grasp after all. Seeing no favorable sign as I went forward, I laid down my accoutrements, and climbed a decayed beech that leaned out over the swamp and promised a good view from the top. As I stretched myself up to look around from the highest attainable branch, there was suddenly a loud crack at the root. With a celerity that would at least have done credit to a bear, I regained the ground, having caught but a momentary glimpse of the country, but enough to convince me no lake was near. Leaving all incumbrances here but my gun, I still pressed on, loath to be thus baffled. After floundering through another alder swamp for nearly half a mile, I flattered myself that I was close on to the lake. I caught sight of a low spur of the mountain sweeping around like a half-extended arm, and I fondly imagined that within its clasp was the object of my search. But I found only more alder swamp. After this region was cleared, the creek began to descend the mountain very rapidly. Its banks became high and narrow, and it went whirling away with a sound that seemed to my ears like a burst of ironical laughter. I turned back with a feeling of mingled disgust, shame, and vexation. In fact I was almost sick, and when I reached my companions, after an absence of nearly two hours, hungry, fatigued, and

disheartened, I would have sold my interest in Thomas's Lake at a very low figure. For the first time, I heartily wished myself well out of the woods. Thomas might keep his lake, and the enchanters guard his possession! I doubted if he had ever found it the second time, or if any one else ever had.

My companions, who were quite fresh, and who had not felt the strain of baffled purpose as I had, assumed a more encouraging tone. After I had rested a while, and partaken sparingly of the bread and whiskey, which in such an emergency — and only in such — is a great improvement on bread and water, I agreed to their proposition that we should make another attempt. As if to reassure us, a robin sounded his cheery call near by, and the winter wren, the first I had heard in these woods, set his music-box going, which fairly ran over with fine, gushing, lyrical sounds. There can be no doubt but this bird is one of our finest songsters. If it would only thrive and sing well when caged, like the canary, how far it would surpass that bird! It has all the vivacity and versatility of the canary, without any of its shrillness. Its song is indeed a little cascade of melody.

We again retraced our steps, rolling the stone, as it were, back up the mountain, determined to commit ourselves to the line of marked trees. These we finally reached, and, after exploring the country to the right, saw that bearing to the left was still the order. The trail led up over a gentle rise of ground, and in less than twenty minutes we were in the woods I had passed through when I found the lake. The error I had made was then plain; we had come off the mountain a few paces too far to the right, and so had passed down or

the wrong side of the ridge, into what we afterward learned was the valley of Alder Creek.

We now made good time, and before many minutes I again saw the mimic sky glance through the trees. As we approached the lake a solitary woodchuck, the first wild animal we had seen since entering the woods, sat crouched upon the root of a tree a few feet from the water, apparently completely non-plussed by the unexpected appearance of danger on the land side. All retreat was cut off, and he looked his fate in the face without flinching. I slaughtered him just as a savage would have done, and from the same motive, — I wanted his carcass to eat.

The mid-afternoon sun was now shining upon the lake, and a low, steady breeze drove the little waves rocking to the shore. A herd of cattle were browsing on the other side, and the bell of the leader sounded across the water. In these solitudes its clang was wild and musical.

To try the trout was the first thing in order. On a rude raft of logs which we found moored at the shore, and which with two aboard shipped about a foot of water, we floated out and wet our first fly in Thomas's Lake; but the trout refused to jump. and, to be frank, not more than a dozen and a half were caught during our stay. Only a week previous, a party of three had taken in a few hours all the fish they could carry out of the woods, and had nearly surfeited their neighbors with trout. But from some cause they now refused to rise, or to touch any kind of bait: so we fell to catching the sunfish, which were small but very abundant. Their nests were all along shore. A space about the size of a breakfast-plate was cleared of sediment and

decayed vegetable matter, revealing the pebbly bottom, fresh and bright, with one or two fish suspended over the centre of it, keeping watch and ward. If an intruder approached, they would dart at him spitefully. These fish have the air of bantam cocks, and, with their sharp, prickly fins and spines and scaly sides, must be ugly customers in a hand-to-hand encounter with other finny warriors. To a hungry man they look about as unpromising as hemlock slivers, so thorny and thin are they; yet there is sweet meat in them, as we found that day.

Much refreshed, I set out with the sun low in the west to explore the outlet of the lake and try for trout there, while my companions made further trials in the lake itself. The outlet, as is usual in bodies of water of this kind, was very gentle and private. The stream, six or eight feet wide, flowed silently and evenly along for a distance of three or four rods, when it suddenly, as if conscious of its freedom, took a leap down some rocks. Thence, as far as I followed it, its descent was very rapid through a continuous succession of brief falls like so many steps down the mountain. Its appearance promised more trout than I found, though I returned to camp with a very respectable string.

Toward sunset I went round to explore the inlet, and found that as usual the stream wound leisurely through marshy ground. The water being much colder than in the outlet, the trout were more plentiful. As I was picking my way over the miry ground and through the rank growths, a ruffed grouse hopped up on a fallen branch a few paces before me, and, jerking his tail, threatened to take flight. But as I was

at that moment gunless and remained stationary, he presently jumped down and walked away.

A seeker of birds, and ever on the alert for some new acquaintance, my attention was arrested, on first entering the swamp, by a bright, lively song, or warble, that issued from the branches overhead, and that was entirely new to me, though there was something in the tone of it that told me the bird was related to the wood-wagtail and to the water-wagtail or thrush. The strain was emphatic and quite loud, like the canary's, but very brief. The bird kept itself well secreted in the upper branches of the trees, and for a long time eluded my eye. I passed to and fro several times, and it seemed to break out afresh as I approached a certain little bend in the creek, and to cease after I had got beyond it; no doubt its nest was somewhere in the vicinity. After some delay the bird was sighted and brought down. It proved to be the small, or northern, water-thrush (called also the New York water-thrush), — a new bird to me. In size it was noticeably smaller than the large, or Louisiana, water-thrush, as described by Audubon, but in other respects its general appearance was the same. It was a great treat to me, and again I felt myself in luck.

This bird was unknown to the older ornithologists, and is but poorly described by the new. It builds a mossy nest on the ground, or under the edge of a decayed log. A correspondent writes me that he has found it breeding on the mountains in Pennsylvania. The large-billed water-thrush is much the superior songster, but the present species has a very bright and cheerful strain. The specimen I saw, contrary to the habits of the family, kept in the treetops like a

warbler, and seemed to be engaged in catching insects.

The birds were unusually plentiful and noisy about the head of this lake; robins, blue jays, and woodpeckers greeted me with their familiar notes. The blue jays found an owl or some wild animal a short distance above me, and, as is their custom on such occasions, proclaimed it at the top of their voices, and kept on till the darkness began to gather in the woods.

I also heard here, as I had at two or three other points in the course of the day, the peculiar, resonant hammering of some species of woodpecker upon the hard, dry limbs. It was unlike any sound of the kind I had ever before heard, and, repeated at intervals through the silent woods, was a very marked and characteristic feature. Its peculiarity was the ordered succession of the raps, which gave it the character of a premeditated performance. There were first three strokes following each other rapidly, then two much louder ones with longer intervals between them. I heard the drumming here, and the next day at sunset at Furlow Lake, the source of Dry Brook, and in no instance was the order varied. There was melody in it, such as a woodpecker knows how to evoke from a smooth, dry branch. It suggested something quite as pleasing as the liveliest bird-song, and was if anything more woodsy and wild. As the yellow-bellied woodpecker was the most abundant species in these woods, I attributed it to him. It is the one sound that still links itself with those scenes in my mind.

At sunset the grouse began to drum in all parts of the woods about the lake. I could hear five at one time, *thump, thump, thump, thump, thr-r-r-r-r-rr*.



It was a homely, welcome sound. As I returned to camp at twilight, along the shore of the lake, the frogs also were in full chorus. The older ones ripped out their responses to each other with terrific force and volume. I know of no other animal capable of giving forth so much sound, in proportion to its size, as a frog. Some of these seemed to bellow as loud as a two-year-old bull. They were of immense size, and very abundant. No frog-eater had ever been there. Near the shore we felled a tree which reached far out in the lake. Upon the trunk and branches the frogs had soon collected in large numbers, and gamboled and splashed about the half-submerged top, like a parcel of schoolboys, making nearly as much noise.

After dark, as I was frying the fish, a panful of the largest trout was accidentally capsized in the fire. With rueful countenances we contemplated the irreparable loss our commissariat had sustained by this mishap; but remembering there was virtue in ashes, we poked the half-consumed fish from the bed of coals and ate them, and they were good.

We lodged that night on a brush-heap and slept soundly. The green, yielding beech-twigs, covered with a buffalo robe, were equal to a hair mattress. The heat and smoke from a large fire kindled in the afternoon had banished every "no-see-em" from the locality, and in the morning the sun was above the mountain before we awoke.

I immediately started again for the inlet, and went far up the stream toward its source. A fair string of trout for breakfast was my reward. The cattle with the bell were at the head of the valley, where they had passed the night. Most of them were two-year-old

steers. They came up to me and begged for salt, and scared the fish by their importunities.

We finished our bread that morning, and ate every fish we could catch, and about ten o'clock prepared to leave the lake. The weather had been admirable, and the lake was a gem, and I would gladly have spent a week in the neighborhood; but the question of supplies was a serious one, and would brook no delay.

When we reached, on our return, the point where we had crossed the line of marked trees the day before, the question arose whether we should still trust ourselves to this line, or follow our own trail back to the spring and the battlement of rocks on the top of the mountain, and thence to the rock where the guide had left us. We decided in favor of the former course. After a march of three quarters of an hour the blazed trees ceased, and we concluded we were near the point at which we had parted with the guide. So we built a fire, laid down our loads, and cast about on all sides for some clew as to our exact locality. Nearly an hour was consumed in this manner and without any result. I came upon a brood of young grouse, which diverted me for a moment. The old one blustered about at a furious rate, trying to draw all attention to herself, while the young ones, which were unable to fly, hid themselves. She whined like a dog in great distress, and dragged herself along apparently with the greatest difficulty. As I pursued her, she ran very nimbly, and presently flew a few yards. Then, as I went on, she flew farther and farther each time, till at last she got up, and went humming through the woods as if she had no interest in them. I went back and caught one of the young, which had simply squatted close to

the leaves. I took it up and set it on the palm of my hand, which it hugged as closely as if still upon the ground. I then put it in my coatsleeve, when it ran and nestled in my armpit.

When we met at the sign of the smoke, opinions differed as to the most feasible course. There was no doubt but that we could get out of the woods; but we wished to get out speedily, and as near as possible to the point where we had entered. Half ashamed of our timidity and indecision, we finally tramped away back to where we had crossed the line of blazed trees, followed our old trail to the spring on the top of the range, and, after much searching and scouring to the right and left, found ourselves at the very place we had left two hours before. Another deliberation and a divided council. But something must be done. It was then mid-afternoon, and the prospect of spending another night on the mountains, without food or drink, was not pleasant. So we moved down the ridge. Here another line of marked trees was found, the course of which formed an obtuse angle with the one we had followed. It kept on the top of the ridge for perhaps a mile, when it entirely disappeared, and we were as much adrift as ever. Then one of the party swore an oath, and said he was going out of those woods, hit or miss, and, wheeling to the right, instantly plunged over the brink of the mountain. The rest followed, but would fain have paused and ciphered away at their own uncertainties, to see if a certainty could not be arrived at as to where we would come out. But our bold leader was solving the problem in the right way. Down and down and still down we went, as if we were to bring up in the bowels of the earth. It was

by far the steepest descent we had made, and we felt a grim satisfaction in knowing that we could not retrace our steps this time, be the issue what it might. As we paused on the brink of a ledge of rocks, we chanced to see through the trees distant cleared land. A house or barn also was dimly descried. This was encouraging; but we could not make out whether it was on Beaver Kill or Mill Brook or Dry Brook, and did not long stop to consider where it was. We at last brought up at the bottom of a deep gorge, through which flowed a rapid creek that literally swarmed with trout. But we were in no mood to catch them, and pushed on along the channel of the stream, sometimes leaping from rock to rock, and sometimes splashing heedlessly through the water, and speculating the while as to where we should probably come out. On the Beaver Kill, my companions thought; but, from the position of the sun, I said, on the Mill Brook, about six miles below our team; for I remembered having seen, in coming up this stream, a deep, wild valley that led up into the mountains, like this one. Soon the banks of the stream became lower, and we moved into the woods. Here we entered upon an obscure wood-road, which presently conducted us into the midst of a vast hemlock forest. The land had a gentle slope, and we wondered why the lumbermen and barkmen who prowl through these woods had left this fine tract untouched. Beyond this the forest was mostly birch and maple.

We were now close to the settlement, and began to hear human sounds. One rod more, and we were cut of the woods. It took us a moment to comprehend the scene. Things looked very strange at first; but quickly they began to change and to put on familiar

features. Some magic scene-shifting seemed to take place before my eyes, till, instead of the unknown settlement which I at first seemed to look upon, there stood the farmhouse at which we had stopped two days before, and at the same moment we heard the stamping of our team in the barn. We sat down and laughed heartily over our good luck. Our desperate venture had resulted better than we had dared to hope, and had shamed our wisest plans. At the house our arrival had been anticipated about this time, and dinner was being put upon the table.

It was then five o'clock, so that we had been in the woods just forty-eight hours; but if time is only phenomenal, as the philosophers say, and life only in feeling, as the poets aver, we were some months, if not years, older at that moment than we had been two days before. Yet younger, too, — though this be a paradox, — for the birches had infused into us some of their own suppleness and strength.







